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Scenes in Pioneer Methodism.

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BY ANNIE MARIA BARNES

(*"Cousin Annie"*),

Author of "Some Lowly Lives," "Life of David Livingstone," etc.

Carefully Edited and Illustrated.

"I hear the tread of pioneers,
Of nations yet to be,
The first low wash of waves where soon
Shall roll a human sea."—*Whittier.*

VOLUME I.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.
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1891.

To My Mother,

AND THE MEMORY OF MY GRANDMOTHER,

Annie Maria Neville—

THE ONE FOR NEARLY AND THE OTHER FOR UPWARD OF HALF A
CENTURY LOYAL FOLLOWERS OF

THE FAITH KNOWN AS METHODISM—

THIS LITTLE VOLUME, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SUFFERINGS AND
THE HEROISM OF ITS EARLY FOUNDERS,

Is Lovingly Inscribed by

THE AUTHOR.

(4)

EXPLANATORY.

IN outlining the plan for the present work, "Scenes in Pioneer Methodism," the Sunday-school Editor wrote: "Use the word 'pioneer' only as equivalent to *beginning*, or *early days*." The author had barely entered upon her task when the wisdom of this restriction became forcibly apparent. Had an attempt been made to give *more* than this, the work would have grown to such an extent as to weary instead of please. Hence the absence from its pages of many of those stirring and pathetic scenes of later pioneer Methodism—especially in this country—and the entire passing over of numerous grand old itinerant heroes whose intrepid deeds are like rugged gems in the crown of Methodism. How could even the hundredth part of these things be told within the limits here prescribed?

The work is therefore simply what the table of contents indicates: A record of such scenes and incidents as illustrate the history of Methodism in its introduction, or *beginning*—first in England, then in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, the West Indies, India, Africa, and in America; or what would more properly be a period extending from the organization of the first Methodist Society in England, in 1729, to about the beginning of the present century.

The utmost accuracy of detail has been aimed at, in every instance; but at the same time a legitimate draft has been drawn upon an author's natural right to "dress up" the material and to present it in as pleasing a shape as possible.

Scores of volumes touching upon the subject have been diligently searched, and the best of their contents appropriated, but the writer wishes especially to acknowledge her indebtedness to

"The Story of Methodism," by Dr. Hyde, and to the Rev. Daniel Wise's "American Methodists."

It is doubtless unnecessary to add that the object has been to awaken in the minds of the young people of our Church a noble enthusiasm for the deeds of those heroic spirits who through untold weariness and woe, toil and suffering, laid the foundations of the great spiritual house of Methodism, and through whose labor and sacrifices we, their descendants, have come into the goodly and gracious heritage that we enjoy to-day.

Duluth, Ga.

A. M. B.

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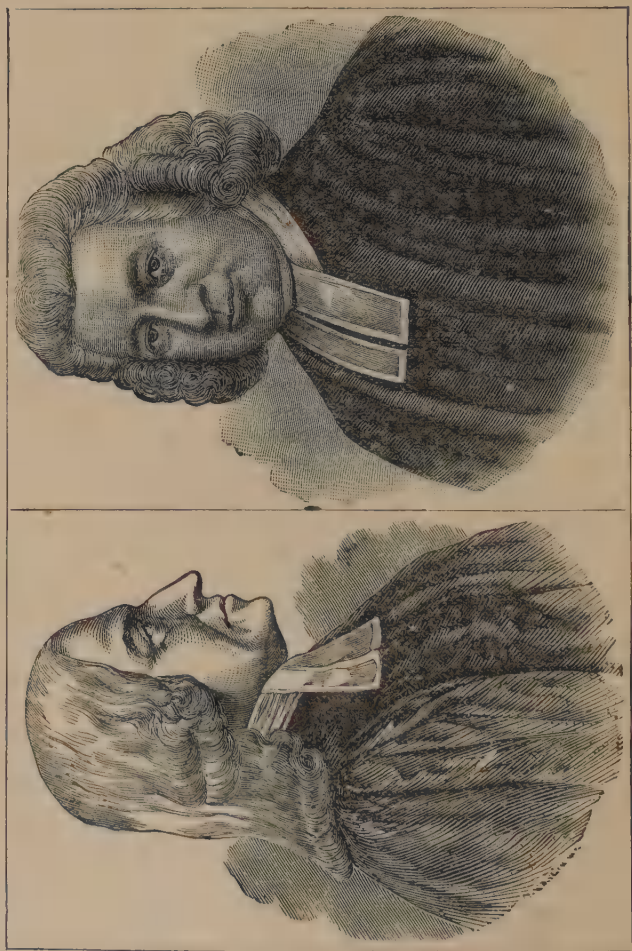
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*"LET THE DEEDS OF OUR METHODIST FATHERS AND
MOTHERS NEVER BE FORGOTTEN; LET YOUR CHIL-
DREN REMEMBER THEM FOREVER."*





JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY.

SCENES IN PIONEER METHODISM.



IN ENGLAND



THE FIRST METHODIST SOCIETY.

ON an autumn afternoon in the year 1729 two young men might have been seen walking slowly across the grounds of Oxford University, England. Their heads were bent nearly together, their shoulders inclined slightly forward, and it was apparent that they were in deep and earnest conversation. The elder of the two seemed about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age; the other was some five years younger. Neither was above medium height, but rather below it. There was, however, an erectness in the carriage of each, a graceful bearing, that made them appear much taller than they really were. The faces of both were beardless, but this did not in the least detract from their manliness. Each had clear-cut, prominent features, a skin that glowed with the rich hue of health and exercise, scrupulously kept hair that fell in rolling locks about their shoulders, and expressive blue eyes. But here the comparison ended, for while the younger was what the fastidious admirer of physical beauty would have called an ex-

ceedingly handsome youth, the elder, owing to a partly conscious and partly unconscious severity of expression and the slightly disfiguring marks of small-pox, could not lay so great a claim to manly attractiveness. But as we learn more of him, as we read of the stirring events that marked his brave and useful life, we shall come to admire him more and more.

These two young men were John and Charles Wesley, the sons of the Rev. Samuel and Mrs. Susanna Wesley, of Epworth, a village lying amidst the sunny fields of Lincolnshire. Of the remarkable family that gave such grace and charm to the plain walls of the Epworth parsonage our young people can read in any of the standard histories of Methodism.

At six years of age John Wesley had been almost miraculously saved from the burning parsonage, and had thenceforth seemed to his noble and consecrated mother as destined for some high and peculiar calling. Other events of his childhood had given promise that this hope would eventually be fulfilled. His school-life had been passed in safety and with credit. The many temptations that lure young men of a less Spartan cast assailed him in vain. Now, at the age of five and twenty, he was serving as curate to his father preparatory to finishing his course at the University—a young man mentally, if not physically, head and shoulders above his fellows, and honored and respected by all.

Charles Wesley, only five years and a half younger than his brother John, seemed twice that much, for the guilelessness of youth was still fresh upon his

face, whereas upon his brother's face it had long ago given place to the graver and sterner lines of mature manhood. Throughout his youth Charles had been noted for a sprightly and active temperament, and inclined to boyish pranks; although on this particular afternoon, when I have chosen to present him to my readers, his face bore an expression as grave and thoughtful as that of his brother.

Charles Wesley had now been three years at Oxford University, while John, after serving the same number of years as his father's curate, had returned a short time previous for his finishing term.

The subject of conversation between these two brothers, as they so thoughtfully walked across the college campus this afternoon in the late autumn of the year 1729 (November), was in full accord with the grave, almost solemn, expression of their countenances. Their talk was of a society which the younger brother had formed during the elder's absence, and which, although it numbered but three members, bade fair to strengthen and rise above the ridicule of its enemies.

In the midst of his fun-loving pursuits a spirit of deeper seriousness had taken possession of Charles Wesley. Not that he had been careless or unbelieving where his soul's good was concerned: the example of an honest father and a pious mother, the influence of a home-training unsurpassed—these were like steadying pulses beneath all lighter and frivolous tendencies. It was that for the first time Charles Wesley was beginning to feel a thrill of that con-

sciousness which the true Christian must at some time experience—the desire to worship God in spirit as well as in the outward form. He was greatly rejoiced when, on disclosing something of his feelings to a few of his more intimate companions, he found two of them ready to unite with him in any plan that promised spiritual good. These two were Robert Kirkham and William Morgan, the latter a warm-hearted, impulsive, but sincerely zealous young Irishman.

On forming themselves into a club, or “society” as it was afterward called, these young men had no definite purpose in view beyond a desire to lead a better and purer life. They began to attend regularly upon the weekly sacrament and the other services of the Church. Such a course in a college filled with wild and dissolute young men, many of whom adopted the unbelieving and skeptical tendencies of the day, could not be long pursued without calling down upon the heads of those engaged in it a storm of ridicule. That they fearlessly withstood it showed the mettle of which they were made. Thinking to mortify and irritate them, their tormentors dubbed them “Methodists,” not only because of the strict methods of their daily course, but also because the term had, through certain connections, become odious. Ah, if they could have known the power which that name was to represent!

John Wesley returned from his father’s parish to the University at Oxford in just the mood for Charles’s communication in regard to the new society to fall upon his troubled and thirsty soul as the long-bar-

ren brook, now rain-filled, tinkles over its pebbly bed. Although he had been ordained both a deacon and a priest in the Church, and although for three years he had been performing his religious and churchly duties with the rigid exactness of a man of his temperament, he had missed the very key-stone of duty itself: he was not a Christian. It was all head and no heart in what he did. It was like the stately flower bending to and fro in the breeze and keeping its own perfume within its bosom, hidden from itself and those who approached it. The flower did its duty by the physical world for which it bloomed and by the breeze that it obeyed, but who of God's human family grew the better or the happier through the rich perfume it should have yielded them?

But as the Voice which sooner or later speaks to us all, whether we heed it or not, had aroused the slumbering conscience of Charles Wesley, so had it also alarmed the soul of John. He was conscious of a vague unrest, of a mere perfunctory interest in all that he did. So far this awakening had shown him naught beyond a feeble desire to change his present course. There was nothing satisfactory; all was doubt and perplexity. At first he determined to retire from the world and lead a life of seclusion and self-denial, hoping to please God the more by thus crucifying the flesh. But this was not God's plan for John Wesley. He was not to stand idle, morbid, and alone, but to serve bravely and cheerfully among thousands. A "serious man," whom he went many

miles to see, said to him: "The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion; you cannot go to heaven alone; you must therefore find companions or make them."

A word fitly spoken. John Wesley was ready to receive it, and he felt as if a hand had touched every chord within his breast and set them all quivering. "Religion was companionship—brotherhood—love!" How prophetic of the great religious body which his fearlessness and faith afterward founded!

Considering the state of his mind, then, on this autumn afternoon in 1729, we cannot wonder that he listened with the deepest interest to his brother's account of the society so newly formed and so bravely determined to carry out the spirit of its organization. It needed no urging on the part of Charles to induce his older and graver brother to become a member. Here was that very companionship, brotherly help, and love which the "serious man" had counseled.

Week by week the little band of devoted "Methodists" slowly increased, despite the ridicule of the thoughtless and the opposition of the maliciously inclined. From that November day in 1729 they began regular attendance upon all Church services, to hold private meetings among themselves—such as morning and evening prayer, the study of sacred subjects, reading of the Scriptures, etc.

In 1730 the warm-hearted and zealous Morgan, overflowing with that love toward his less fortunate fellow-men which characterized his after life, began to lead the little band out on missions of love and mercy to the poor, the sick, the sorrowing, and to

those in prison. Thus at the beginning of a religious revolution, the mighty power of which has been felt in every habitable quarter of the globe, did its founders strike the very key-note of that governing principle of the spiritual life of the great body of Christians known as "Methodists"—the principle of fellowship, brotherhood, and love.

The times in which the star of Methodism rose as a clear and beautiful light were sadly in need of such a light. The spirit of sectarian bigotry and strife, of worldliness and profanity, was abroad in the land. In his "Story of Methodism" Dr. Hyde says: "The history of religion in England, since Augustine with his company entered Canterbury twelve hundred years before, shouting, 'Lord, save this guilty city!' had been like the history of English politics—a tale of strife. Especially had the last two centuries, since Henry VIII. had broken from Rome, been a period of constant struggle. Protestant and Romanist, Prelatist and Independent, had fiercely fought for existence or for mastery. The fair fields of England had been stained with English blood by English hands; the fresh air had been tainted with the smell of human sacrifices in fires of English kindling."

That this war of passions was fatal to the steady and healthful growth of a pure religion we may well believe. Not that there were wanting many examples of genuine personal piety, since those were the days that gave us such divines as Baxter, Barrow, Owen, and Howe; but that even the honest and manly efforts of these sincere and sturdy spirits offered but

weak resistance to the rushing tide of infidelity and wrangling skepticism flooding court and people. Even from the Churches, from those that professed to be steadfastly grounded in the one living faith, no help seemed to come; for the Churches themselves had been invaded and tainted by the corrupting influences then settling down like a blight over all the land. What was worse, they were in a strange state of decay, worn out with bitter controversy, and smitten with the baneful blight of infidelity.

Never in the days of Martin Luther had there been such actual and general darkness, such wide-spread barbarism. And as the Protestant Reformation is said to have been begun with the earnest efforts of the fearless monk who shook the world, so may we in all honesty assert that with the rising of the morning-star of Methodism was inaugurated the day-dawn of that pure Christian religion which throughout all sects owning Christ as their Head has given to the world its noblest and grandest impetus.

At the very time that the chill and gloom of skepticism were settling down as a murky pall over England, when Voltaire and his school had succeeded in their unholy design of poisoning the whole social and religious atmosphere of France, and Frederick of Prussia with the Rationalists had made "a desolate waste of the faith in the very home of Luther," God was maturing his plans through a mere handful of brave young spirits, called in derision "Methodists." Thus the night had deepened, but the dawn was at hand. Truly we might in vain search the

world over for a more eloquent illustration of how man's extremity was God's opportunity.

As the months went on into the years the little society, formed for purely religious purposes, steadily increased in membership. When John Wesley returned from a mission to Georgia—of which we shall speak presently—he placed himself more conspicuously at the head of the society, and found that it had a score of members. Many of these have made Methodist history what it is. Of the widening influence of this first society of Methodism we can speak no further in this chapter.



THE FIRST EVANGELIST OF METHODISM.

WHILE Charles Wesley, in the earnestness of his newly awakened soul, was leading his band of young "Methodists" to the weekly communions of the Church, there was serving as waiter at an inn in the quaint old city of Gloucester a rough, uncouth lad of fifteen who was destined to contribute more than one stirring chapter to the records of Methodism. This was George Whitefield, whose boy-life gave as little promise of his noble manhood as the darkness of midnight gives of the coming day. Through all his childhood he had been wayward and headstrong, restive of restraint, and had many vicious tendencies. He would take things that were not his own, and more than once had even robbed his mother's till. He seemed to hate instruction and to shun every noble influence. In short, as he expressed it himself

in after life, it appeared as if he were determined to develop a "fitness to be damned." Yet, in the midst of all these willful inclinations, there were times when the "still small voice" spoke to him in tones he could not silence. At this very time, when in a blue apron and cap he was "washing mops and cleaning rooms" at the hotel, that incomparable book, Kempis's "Imitation of Christ," fell into his hands. It touched his heart as nothing else had ever done. He had always cherished a strong passion for the theater, and had intended to go upon the stage as soon as he could perfect the arrangements. It made no difference to him that his mother's tears flowed freely and that her prayers were many and fervent whenever this subject was mentioned to her. His indifference then was only a stronger proof of the real callousness of his nature. Whitefield had early developed a rare gift of eloquence. When a mere stripling he often astonished his hearers by bursts of oratory that would have been remarkable in one of double his age.

As we have seen, the perusal of Kempis's "Imitation of Christ" set Whitefield to thinking; and that was doubtless the first serious thinking he had ever done in his life. At any rate, it gave him an impetus in a more commendable direction than any for which he had yet shown a tendency. He began to have a thirst for knowledge, a desire to comprehend the many grand truths set forth in the "Imitation."

About this time a poor student of Pembroke College, Oxford University, chanced to visit George

Whitefield's mother. He was what was known as a "servitor"—that is, one who supported himself through college by doing services for the richer and more fortunate students. Mrs. Whitefield had always been ambitious for the advancement of her son, with a mother's ready intuition recognizing his unusual gifts. That she had not given him more advantages, even supposing that he would have accepted them, was owing to the pathetic fact that she was not only a widow but a very poor one. The coming of the Pembroke student, however, opened a most alluring vista in the mother's bright dreams. During a conversation relative to his college life, the young man chanced to remark that he had earned enough during the past quarter to pay his college expenses and leave him a penny besides. At this announcement the widow turned to her son and cried with animation, "Will you not go to Oxford University and do as this young man has done?" He at once and cheerfully consented, showing the influence which the "Imitation of Christ" had had upon him.

A few influential friends were now found willing to help the young man secure an entrance into the college, provided he would give genuine evidence of turning from his old vicious life and of determining to apply himself to study so as to be prepared for admittance. The next three years of Whitefield's life are thus summed up: "He laid aside his blue apron, gave himself up to study, shook off every old idle habit, became very attentive to religious duties, and, aided by a friend's gift to pay his matriculation fee,

entered college at Oxford when he was eighteen years of age."

Before entering college Whitefield, in common with many others, had heard of the band of "Methodists" recently organized there. "I loved them," declared Whitefield, "from the time I heard of them." Every principle set forth in this open and fearless start toward a purer and better life seemed to accord with his ideas of genuine religion and of true brotherly affection. Yet, despite this sympathetic feeling, Whitefield for some reason kept himself aloof from the society during the first months of his college course. It was doubtless owing to an extreme timidity, a reluctance to presume beyond his place. Most of the Oxford students of that day were of the richer class, many of them the sons of noblemen. These young men were as haughty and overbearing as they were wealthy, and there is little doubt that the poor servitors were shown their position and given forcible hint to keep it. It may be that Whitefield expected to find some of this spirit in the Wesleys and the other young men who with them formed the "Holy Club," though the name itself signified that they were above all such low and petty feelings. He kept a respectful distance, but with swelling heart regarded the little company as it passed through sneering crowds to the Church services. He longed to be one of them, but dared not make the first advances. He now more fully comprehended the nature of their work and appreciated the courage that rendered them unconscious of their tormentors.

Strong whisperings of the Voice that had awakened Charles Wesley from his old merry, thoughtless life, and aroused John from his apathy, now began to be heard deep within the soul of George Whitefield. Conscience smote him as with a many-lashed whip. More plainly than ever he saw the wickedness of his past life. It seemed to him that despite the penitence of the present the Almighty must consume him with wrath for the sins of the past. Tormented, blinded, misled, he hoped to do penance by a rigid crucifixion of the body, an humbling of the spirit to the dust. So had John Wesley sought to atone, to purify himself for nobler work, and found his mistake. Would Whitefield find his also? Strange that to the storm-torn soul of neither came at that time a soothing whisper of the gentle yet all-powerful Saviour, so willing to forgive the truly penitent, so ready to save.

Whitefield began to put various crosses upon himself, with the wild hope that he would in this way commend himself to the graciousness of Heaven. How little he knew of true religion! He wore unseemly woolen gloves many sizes too large for him, a patched gown made all out of date, and dirty, slipshod shoes. He let his hair go uncared for, his face unwashed; he ate coarse brown-bread and drank "sage-tea without any sugar." Whole days were passed by him in lying prostrate upon the cold ground in earnest supplication to Heaven that his sins might be forgiven according as he made amends for them. In fact, as one of his biographers declares, he came

near permanently ruining his health by these "vain ways of trying to save his soul."

For three years he struggled on in this distressed frame of mind, becoming the butt of every ungenerous student in the college, when a happy incident brought him to the notice of Charles Wesley. A mutual regard sprung up, and in a short while he was a member of the club known as "The Methodists." Though he began to moderate somewhat the severe penances he had imposed upon himself, he still kept up many that were exceedingly humiliating. Even though he had identified himself with those endeavoring to live nearer to God, the enlightenment had not yet come to him that the pardon of sin is not to be purchased through any penance put upon the body.

Strange as it may seem, Whitefield's condition at this time was but the condition of others of the little club. Not until they came to realize and acknowledge their utter dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ did their true religious life begin. The knowledge came to Whitefield through the reading of a book that Charles Wesley lent him, "The Life of God in the Soul of Man." His feelings when the glad light broke upon him are best described in his own words: "O with what joy unspeakable, even joy that was full and big with glory, was my soul filled when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God broke in upon my disconsolate soul!"

The days preceding this awakening had been the

darkest and most bitter in all Whitefield's checkered career. Such were the torments of his mind that he entirely neglected his person. He became so shabby and sloven that his employers finally dismissed him in disgust; and whenever he appeared among the students he was hooted at and covered with dirt. He lay, "whole days and weeks prostrate upon the ground, with sweat dripping from his face or trembling with cold." His health gave way, and a sickness which from the first seemed mortal came upon him. Speaking of it afterward, he said: "For it I shall bless God through the ages of eternity." And no wonder, since it was in the seventh week of this sickness that the light suddenly burst upon him—the knowledge that Jesus the Saviour had died for him, a sinner, and through the atoning blood his sins which were as scarlet could be washed to the whiteness of snow.

Recovering from this sickness at length, Whitefield began preparations for that marvelous career that has added so great a luster to the crown of early Methodism. He would become an humble expounder of the gospel of Christ Jesus, the bearer of light to those who still sat in darkness. Almost the entire night previous to his ordination he spent upon his knees in prayer, watching like some true knight of old "with his armor on," as an earnest of his devotion to the cause which he had espoused.

Ordained as a minister of Christ, Whitefield at once entered upon the course he had chosen—that of an evangelist, "chief of all since the gospel came."

No particular Church should be his, no specified pulpit. He would preach to all; to all alike who came should the glad tidings of Christ's death and resurrection be proclaimed. To the winning sweetness, the matchless persuasiveness, the marvelous oratory of Whitefield's preaching "all of his day bear witness." Nothing like it had been heard before; very little like it since. Hardened skeptic and weeping penitent were alike swayed by its electrical power. Thousands fell prostrate before its sweeping eloquence as the leaves of the forest bestrew the track of a rushing gale. David Hume, one of the stoniest unbelievers of his day—the man whose heart was said to be seldom, if ever, genuinely touched—was heard more than once to declare that he would go twenty miles to hear Whitefield preach, whereas to other preachers he had neither the patience nor the politeness to listen. Dr. Franklin, after making up his mind beforehand not to give one penny to a cause which he heard that Whitefield was going to present on a certain occasion, ended by emptying his pockets to the last penny, twenty pounds in all, and with an unusual flush upon his face bore witness with manly straightforwardness that in another moment under such a storm of oratory he would have been compelled to offer his whole estate.

If such was the effect upon those with strong heads and rock-incased hearts, what must it have been upon the humble and more impressionable class? It is with no surprise, then, we read that immediately after the preaching of one of Whitefield's most

powerful sermons the bishop was informed that fifteen persons had gone "stark, raving mad." The reply of the bishop showed that he was in full sympathy with the wonderful preacher: "Well, then," said he, "I should like for the madness to abide until the next Sabbath."

The appearance of the matchless orator was in pleasing accord with the silver utterances of his tongue, the unsurpassed bursts of eloquence that came rushing from his blazing heart. Tall and fair, his face was one to win all beholders by the gracious sweetness of its expression. Ingenuousness and ardor, sincerity and devotion, had left their glowing stamp upon every manly feature. His form was symmetry itself, his gestures and grace of bearing declared by those who had seen both the famous actor and statesman to surpass those of Garrick and Chatham. As to the common people, they heard him in "wild, uncritical delight." He had what the most exacting of critics pronounced "the finest voice of the century." Its rich yet delicate tones were often audible to every ear in a congregation of thousands, while its power rose above the "noise of the elements and the tumult of the people." Yet, the real power was not in the voice nor in the man, but in the God who spoke through him. This Whitefield often acknowledged with that rare humility that was as much a part of him as his ardor and his eloquence. As he gave it forth to the people, the gospel seemed to them "as something newly revealed." They were startled, then amazed, then struck with the lightning-bolt of

conviction. Under his preaching there began such a "searching of hearts" as had never been known before. O the delight he took in being only an humble evangelist to the people!

A summons now came to Whitefield from John Wesley, who was in the new colony of Georgia. His heart leaped to meet it as a soldier's leaps at the bugle-call "to arms." Setting out for Bristol, there to make final preparations for his departure, he preached unweariedly all along the route, in such houses as he could secure, but oftener by the wayside and in the open fields. So had the great Master and his disciples preached before him. Reaching Bristol, one of his mighty trumpet-blasts startled, aroused, alarmed the whole city. Whenever he preached the people came in crowds that swelled into thousands. He soon had to leave the churches and go into the open air, for not half the people could be accommodated in the buildings. Everywhere the word seemed "sharper than a two-edged sword," while the "doctrine of the new birth made its way like lightning in the hearers' consciences."

Going away for a short time on a farewell visit to some relatives in a neighboring city, he was on his return greeted by larger and more demonstrative crowds than ever, many persons pressing through the throngs to grasp his hand or to welcome and bless him as he passed by. He preached now regularly five times each week. Of this preaching we have the following graphic and thrilling picture:

"Men climbed to the church-roof, clung to the rails of the organ-loft, while the breath of the crowd within condensed into drippings on the pillars."

When he came to preach his farewell sermon the loud sobs and piteous weeping of those he was leaving for a time drowned even the bugle-notes of his silvery eloquence; and for long hours, even until considerably past midnight, he remained at his post unwearied, speaking words of comfort and of cheer. The next morning at dawn, without allowing himself more than an hour or so of rest, he started for London. The scenes enacted here were even more thrilling: "At London all the city was stirred. If he assisted at the Lord's Supper, the elements had to be resupplied. If he spoke for a charity, the collections were trebled. The police were employed to manage the crowds. Before the morning light throngs of people, as at the American theatrical representations, filled the streets, making their way by lanterns to secure places for hearing his ten-o'clock sermon."

After such an "immense stir" as this, it is no wonder that we find it recorded that there were many who experienced a feeling of deep relief when they heard that he had departed for Georgia. Skeptics they were, doubtless, and frivolous devotees at the shrines of Folly and Fashion, whom his loud bugle-blasts had startled even in their places of fancied security and professed indifference. Ah, if they could have known how he was to return after awhile to shake that wicked old city to its very foundations!

THE CONVERSION OF THE WESLEYS.

ON a sunny day in the middle of October, 1735 (the 14th), a quaint, old-fashioned brig left its moorings at the Gravesend wharf, England, and set sail toward the mouth of the Thames River. This was the good brig "Symmonds," bearing a company of emigrants to the newly founded colony of Georgia in America. She carried other passengers besides, among them our old acquaintances John and Charles Wesley. The two brothers were going out in response to an urgent call from General Oglethorpe for missionaries to preach among the Indians.

After beating about for weeks in the channel and out upon the Atlantic, driven by storms or drifting aimlessly amidst "dead calms," the vessel at last, some time in December, got fairly started on her way.

The emigrants going out to Georgia consisted chiefly of a company of Moravians, with their bishop. They had been driven from their home through fierce religious persecution; and seeking the protection of their countryman, the Count Zinzendorf, of Herrnhut, himself exiled on account of his faith, they were graciously received and given passage to the then newly settled colony of Georgia, where free lands were offered them.

The two Wesleys were at once struck with the appearance and behavior of these people. John, especially, spent hours with them, deeply impressed by their simple religious faith and making a study of their language so that he might converse with them.

The tribute paid them was that they were "a good, devout, peaceable, and heavenly-minded people." When they worshiped in public, as they did regularly twice each day, by "harmoniously singing the praises of the great Creator," Wesley was one of their most attentive listeners.

On Sunday, January 25, 1736, a terrible storm struck the vessel. "The sea" says Mr. Wesley, "sparkled and smoked as if it had been on fire. The air darted forth lightning, and the wind blew so fiercely that you could scarcely look it in the face and draw your breath. The waves did not swell so high as at other times, being pressed down by the impetuosity of the blast; neither did the ship roll much, but it quivered, jarred, and shook. About half-past seven a great sea broke in upon us, which split the mainsail, carried away the companion-ladder, filled between-decks, and rushed into the great cabin." This naturally threw the passengers into a state of wild alarm. Many of them cried outright, and others rushed frantically about or threw themselves prostrate upon the deck. Even the calm, methodical Wesley confessed to a feeling of some trepidation. But amidst all this terror and confusion the Moravians were undisturbed; and drawing nearer together, they sung their sweet psalms of praise. When the angry sea broke over the ship and the mainsail was split in pieces, they sung on undismayed. The approach of death had no terrors for them. Many on board were impressed by this calm and fearless behavior, the highest type of true

courage. Mr. Wesley inquired of one of the Moravians afterward: "Were you not at all afraid during the raging of the storm?" "I thank God, no," was the ready answer. "But were not your women and children afraid?" "No, our women and children were not afraid; they do not fear to die."

Here was the most sublime exhibition of faith that Wesley had yet witnessed. In the face of death these people could stand fearlessly singing their songs. When questioned about it their answer came ready and free: "We are not afraid to die. We see naught in death to terrify us." What *was* this faith that could so uphold them in the very embrace of the grim Destroyer? The question had entered Wesley's mind, and day and night clamored for an answer. Other thoughts, too, gave him unrest. "Was it not possible that a man might possess what he thought true religion, and which might after all prove only formal and defective, lulling into temporary sleep that feeling which it could never eradicate—the fear of death?" He had thought that he was religious, that he was serving God to the best of his knowledge and ability, and yet here at the first uprising of "nature's dread elements" he had felt the chilly and uneasy sensation of dread stir at the very roots of his soul. What had he missed, that he was thus dismayed in the probable presence of death?

The "Symmonds," after a tedious and eventful voyage, cast anchor in the Savannah River, February 5, 1736.

Among the first acquaintances Wesley made on his

arrival in the new country was a well-known Moravian elder, Spangenberg by name. On going to him for advice in regard to some proposed plans, he was considerably startled by Spangenberg somewhat abruptly remarking: "My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" For a moment Wesley was at a loss how to answer. The questions were new to him; they filled him with sudden and deep surprise and unusual concern. Spangenberg continued: "Do you know Jesus Christ?" Here at least was a question he could readily answer, and so without further hesitation he replied: "Yes, I know that he is the Saviour of the world." "True," returned Spangenberg, "but do you know that he has saved *you*?" Again Wesley was deeply perplexed, but he bravely made answer: "I *hope* that he has died to save me." Spangenberg added: "Do you know yourself?" "I do," responded Wesley after some little indecision, and with considerable misgiving, as he himself afterward confessed. The truth is he did *not* know himself, but the searching questions of the Moravian elder had fallen upon fertile soil. Henceforth he was filled with the heroic resolve to struggle on until he did comprehend fully and clearly just what he was and where he stood. He now started on his ministerial career in the New World with unswerving zeal. The most rigid self-denial was practiced, the severest penalties were imposed upon the body—in all of which he was joined

by his brother Charles. They "slept on the ground, lived on bread and water, and went barefoot;" but despite this harsh mortifying of the flesh, this rigid following out of a mistaken course, they fell far short of the end for which they endured it all—the winning of souls. Ah, they had yet to learn that the pure and simple religion of Christ was something totally different from their crude ideals. At length, after a year of such mistaken crosses, which they bore with sublime energy and patience "amidst slander and persecution," Charles returned to England, his brother soon following.

During John Wesley's voyage home he constantly brooded over his failure in the new country. Among the thoughts that crowded upon him was this: Perhaps, after all, he needed redemption fully as much as the savages to whom he had gone on so momentous a mission. This thought re-opened his eyes to his own spiritual needs. Was he not also a sinner? Did he know any thing of the witness of the Spirit in the heart, about which Spangenberg had questioned him—the witness that he was an accepted child of God? What had been his works heretofore but the mere outward form? What soul, what heart had been in them? To what had amounted his views of "councils and decrees," of Church government, his rigid crucifying of the flesh, his strict adherence to certain forms and ceremonies? What peace, what comfort, what joy had they brought him? Ah, he had yet to learn that without faith—the key that unlocks the innermost door of the Christian sanctuary

—all works are vain. “I went to America to convert the Indians,” he cried from the depths of his stricken soul, “but O who shall convert me? who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief?”

Hard by the English coast the ship bringing John Wesley home passed the one that bore George Whitefield to Georgia. How different the mental state of each at that moment! The one broken in spirit and cast down with despair; the other joyous in temper, buoyant with hope, and filled with the knowledge that God was ever near.

Deplorable as was his condition, Wesley felt that there were others around him in the same perplexed and darkened state—men like himself, earnest, serious, and faithfully doing all that they could “to serve the Church.” What *was* it that was lacking? Still the same tormenting cry! In rigid self-examination he went over every point in the case. As if they had been those of another, he recounted “his attainments, his devotions, his charities, his labors, his resignation to the divine will.” Then came the searching question, “Do all these things make a man acceptable with God?” Out of all the mystery and perplexity came at last a voice whose trumpet-notes pierced his inmost soul: “No, no; only when ennobled by *faith* are these things acceptable in the sight of God!” But *what* was this faith? With the suddenness of a lightning-flash it came to him: “It was the faith in Christ—that faith which gave the sure trust that through the merits of Him who died

on Calvary his sins were all forgiven." What a simple thing it was, and yet how widely had he missed it!

At this stage of his great mental distress Wesley thought again of his old friends the Moravians. There were in London three or four congregations of these sincerely pious people, to one of which a pastor, Peter Bohler by name, had recently been sent out from Germany, chiefly through the efforts of the good Count Zinzendorf. Within a week after Wesley's return from Georgia he met Bohler for the first time—on February 7, 1738; "a day," as he declares, "much to be remembered." And no wonder! for "by Bohler, in the hand of the great God," testifies Mr. Wesley, "I was convinced of unbelief." As he had been so forcibly struck with the strong yet simple fervor of the little company of Moravians on shipboard, he was now "amazed at Bohler's accounts of the holiness and happiness that attended living faith." Under Bohler's guidance he read the New Testament as he had never read it before, and felt his "filling heart" heave and flow.

But as earnest and untiring as John Wesley was in his efforts and longings to gain this greatest blessing of all, Charles attained it before him. Having been the first of the brothers to win the name of Methodist, he was also the first to enter into the fullness of that simple faith which has been the cornerstone of Methodist doctrine from that day to this. For some time Charles also had been wrestling with the doubts and perplexities that filled his heart. One

evening while in London he visited a Moravian meeting. He heard the sweet singing, and for a time thought himself "in a choir of angels." Falling ill soon after this, he was tenderly watched over by a poor mechanic named Bray. Bray was a rough, unlettered man, "who," as Charles Wesley himself expressed it, "knew nothing but Christ, and knowing him knew all things." As ignorant and "unlearned in books" as he was, there was yet one thing this humble mechanic could teach the accomplished collegian, and that was "the way of the Lord made perfect through faith." The good Peter Bohler came many times to see the sick young man, and prayed and talked with him. Others of the Moravian society were constantly at his bedside. One of the female members of Bray's family much encouraged him by reciting a thrilling story of her experiences and final redemption through simple faith in Christ.

One evening, after having been engaged in "sweet song" with his brother John, Peter Bohler, and the others, and just as he was sinking into sleep filled with thoughts of the divine love, Charles heard a voice exclaim, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities!" The words went to his heart with the force of an electric shock. All tendency to sleep was banished from his eyes. Raising himself up in the bed, he gazed about him—the one thought surging within him, "O that Christ *would* speak so to me!" On expressing his wonder as to whence had come the voice, the good woman said to him: "It was I, a weak, sim-

ple creature, that spoke; but the words were Christ's. He commanded me to say them, and so constrained me that I could not forbear." He now sent for his devoted friend Bray, and after several hours spent in earnest conversation and in the wrestlings of prayer, the light broke upon his darkened soul with the radiance of the noonday sun. He at last saw himself a sinner saved through the redeeming blood of Christ.

Poor John still stumbled on amidst the darkness, but for him too the light was at hand. So is it for all who strive by faith to bring it nigh. At five o'clock on the third morning after Charles's conversion John Wesley opened his Testament upon these words: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." Turning the leaves of his Testament again, the next words to reach his eyes were: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." That same afternoon he attended St. Paul's Cathedral. Deep within his heart fell the words of the anthem:

Out of the depths I have called unto thee, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice.

In the evening of the same eventful day he attended a society meeting in Aldersgate street, and heard a layman read Luther's description of the change the Spirit works in the heart through faith in Christ. "I felt my heart strangely warmed," says Mr. Wesley. "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me

from 'the law of sin and death.' After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations, but cried out and they fled away. They returned again and again; I as often lifted up my eyes, and he sent me help from his holy place. Now I was always conqueror."

Thus were the originator and the grand central figure of the greatest religious movement since the days of Martin Luther brought to a knowledge of saving faith as it is in Christ Jesus, chiefly through the instrumentality of the humble people known as Moravians.



HOW ITINERANCY BEGAN.

No sooner had the witness entered the hearts of the Wesleys than they longed to make it manifest unto others. There was to them but one assured and satisfactory way, and that was by proclaiming the glad tidings abroad—the tidings of a full and free salvation through simple faith. They were well aware of the opposition with which this new doctrine would meet, not only from the outside people but from those in the Churches. What a sad reflection was this upon the professing Christians of that day! And yet it is in no wise too harsh or exaggerated. The truth is, there were very few real Christians at that time; even the clergy had grown careless and half-hearted. Many were so swallowed up in the sea of sectarian strife angrily raging at that time, so completely blinded by their bigotry, as to be utterly incapable of catching even a ray of the one pure and

beautiful light, the light that shone steadfast and clear from the throne of the Most High. And a still sadder picture can be drawn of those who did not hesitate to attend horse-races, play cards, or drink wine, while they wore the sacred vestments of the Church! As to the members, there were those who *called* themselves disciples of Christ, yet within their hearts could be found very little of that divine principle which sheds its radiant beauty over the whole Christian life—the love of one's fellow-men, that charity for them that covers a multitude of sins. Then there was another class of Christians—like some that we may see at this day, when so many pious men and women have made the records of the Churches glorious with the shining examples of their zeal: these were the ease-loving, self-indulgent, drowsy members of the Churches, who were satisfied with themselves as they were, and did not want to have the trouble of making any extra effort toward the salvation of their souls. It is no wonder that, taken up as they were with their vain, deceitful ways, their life of ease and pleasure, often of gluttony and vice, both clergy and people should have opposed a stubborn and angry front to the new doctrine which the two brothers were ready to proclaim abroad.

Soon after his conversion John went on a visit to the good Count Zinzendorf, at his home in Germany—a sort of pilgrimage of gratitude for the precious results brought about by the Moravians. While he was absent Charles began telling in public the glad story of his coming to Christ. At the close of these

talks he would exhort those who had not found this gracious Saviour to make haste in their search for him. He had a sweet, persuasive way that proved irresistible to many; and being a rare singer, the melody of his voice stirred the most callous with a power indescribable.

Great crowds began to attend these meetings. Soon the private houses where they were held would not contain the multitudes. Charles tried to secure a church or some public hall for his gatherings, but rarely succeeded. Now and then, however, a church was obtained for a night or so, through the zeal of some clergyman who, like himself before the great change had come, was earnestly seeking the light; but it always ended in the church being taken away through the opposition or dissatisfaction of the people. When required to state what they found so objectionable in Mr. Wesley's talks, they could answer nothing, save that they were "too earnest, too forcible," and made them feel "too uncomfortable." They were not the first, nor the last, lukewarm Christians to be made to feel uncomfortable under the sledge-hammer strokes of early Methodism.

On John's return from Germany he joined his brother in these talks and the giving of experiences. As often as they secured a pulpit in London, Bristol, or any other city, on coming down from it they were met with the announcement: "You cannot preach in this pulpit again." "And why not, sir?" they would ask of the curate making it. "Because you *will* preach the intolerable doctrine of salvation by faith.

Besides, when you preach here such crowds come to church that our regular hearers can't get their seats, and they don't like so much heat and such crowding." Nor was persecution lacking, even thus early in the work. Charles Wesley, through a warm personal friend, who was then serving as vicar of the parish of Islington, a suburb of London, was chosen curate of the same charge. He entered upon his new duties with much energy and ardor; but, alas! no sooner had he come upon the scene than he was most shamefully treated even by the wardens of the church. They jeered him and mocked him, even when in the pulpit; they told him publicly that both he and his brother were "full of the devil," and finally he was by force prevented from entering the pulpit. The young preacher, undaunted in spirit and determined not to give way as long as the ecclesiastical head of the Church upheld him, at last appealed to the bishop; but that haughty dignitary turned his back coldly upon him, and declared that the church wardens had done "exactly right."

Nor was John free from the like persecutions. Similar experiences were his in and around London. At length, meeting his brother for conference, they decided that since "all the pulpits of London were barred against them," they would proclaim the tidings as had their Master of old, with the highways as their "pulpit places," and the heavens as their "sounding-board." And now began the struggle that has given to the story of Methodism one of its most soul-enkindling chapters—a struggle in which

these dauntless men planted its standard where the world must evermore recognize and honor it. Denied the pulpits of the churches, and urged by Whitefield, who had returned from Georgia, they determined to do their preaching in the fields, as Whitefield had already begun to do.

In this same year, 1739, the first itinerancy of Methodism began in earnest. On the commons, by the way-side, in public squares, wherever and whenever they could get a hearing, these three consecrated men proclaimed the "good tidings of great joy." Early and late they were upon the road, sometimes in the saddle and again on foot, going often at some urgent call with no provision for the morrow, with not even a thought of what they should eat, or what they should wear, or where they should lodge. So, seventeen hundred years before, had the faithful twelve gone forth with "neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purses, nor scrip for the journey." O grand men—so glorious in your faith, so heroic in your endeavors to bring light into all the dark places—what does not the world owe you, even outside the immediate sharers of your faith?

Thousands flocked to these open-air meetings. In more than one instance the crowd was estimated at over twenty thousand; often it numbered ten thousand. But these crowds were not always quiet and attentive; indeed, they were oftener the reverse. At times they consisted of an angry and discontented multitude with faces flushed, eyes flashing ominously, and tongues uttering fierce invectives against the

preacher. Again, a surging human mass shouted out savage curses and threats, while stones, sticks, rotten eggs, lumps of mud, and every conceivable missile were hurled at the preacher, sometimes cutting deep gashes that caused the blood to stream over his face, or knocking him senseless. Every now and then, led by a still more vindictive spirit, the crowd would press around the rude box-pulpit, overturn it, and nearly strip the clothes from the preacher in striving to trample him in the mud; but God always protected his zealous servants. Nor were these the only persecutions. They were more than once carried before an English court, surrounded by a howling mob that did not consist of common people alone, and made to pay heavy fines for "trespassing upon ground to which they had no right." Once a "nobleman"—what a sad misnomer!—sued one of the Wesleys for simply passing through his grounds on his way to an appointment. That the English court, professing to be a court of justice, imposed in fine and costs the sum of one hundred dollars shows the blinded and prejudicial spirit against which these brave men had to contend. As true servants of their Lord—willing to be abused, even spit upon and stoned for his sake, as he had been for theirs—they kept on their way. The same spirit enabled those who came after them to imitate their example; the same spirit made heroes of cowards and soldiers of servants. Years after in the New World, where other intrepid warriors went forth to conquer the hosts of sin, it was this same fervid inspiration of heroic ex-

ample that made the icy currents of the overflowed rivers, the mud sloughs of the almost impenetrable swamps, the cutting blasts of the winter winds, the beat of the rain, tempest, hunger, cold, deprivations, sufferings, seem as naught so long as the soul-fire glowed within.

During this year, which extended well into that of 1740, the two brothers and Whitefield traveled over hundreds of miles of country, preaching, singing, and entreating the lost to come to an ever present and loving Saviour. Of the magnitude of this work we may have some idea when we learn that within this space John Wesley alone preached no less than five hundred sermons, and only eight of them in churches. Nor was England the only ground covered. From Bristol both Wesley and Whitefield penetrated into Wales. Of this movement, so richly fruitful in results, we shall hear more in its proper place.

* * *

THE FIRST LOVE-FEAST OF METHODISM.

ALTHOUGH John and Charles Wesley were now boldly engaged in preaching the new religion of salvation by faith, they were still members of the Church of England. It had grieved them deeply to see the fierce opposition with which they were everywhere met. Their most delicate feelings had been frequently trampled upon by those calling themselves brothers in Christ. More than once the temptation had come to them to withdraw from a connection in which they experienced only bitterness and opposi-

tion, and found a Church of their own. But they were good men as well as true Churchmen, having much of that brotherly patience, that real charity, which makes one willing to endure even the bitterness of persecution for the sake of harmony. Besides, it was painful for them to think of severing themselves through religious differences from a Church in the faith of which they had been born and reared, and of which their father had been such a zealous minister and their mother so bright and shining a light. Their great hope was that they might yet open the eyes of their misguided brethren to the only true and living way, through Jesus the Saviour. Then, indeed, would the Church become one that they could in very truth call their own.

As time passed, however, they realized more and more despairingly that such a result for the Church as a whole could never be reached. But even then a deeper sense of faith and loyalty than many in their position would have displayed kept them from making an open break. The most that they did was to attach themselves to one of those societies which, succeeding the death of Cromwell and not long after the re-establishment of the Church of England, were formed by some devout members for the purpose of engaging in "more intimate and sympathetic religious exercises than the Church service offered." Among these people were a number of Moravians, and in the society which the Wesleys joined they were not long in finding that "love and fellowship" which they had so ardently craved. From these so-

cieties came many of those earnest and devoted spirits afterward known as "Methodists."

On the night preceding the first of January, 1739—as the two Wesleys and Whitefield, together with about sixty of the "brethren," members of the society, were at a "watch-meeting" in Fetter-lane—occurred that remarkable scene which may properly be called "the first love-feast of Methodism." From twelve at night until three in the morning they had either remained upon their knees in prayer or spent the hours in recounting their many and varied experiences or in the sweet singing of inspiring song. At the latter-named hour, as they were continuing "instant in prayer," the power of God came so mightily upon them that many fell prostrate to the ground, while others, springing up, shouted aloud for joy. Truly it was a scene to awe and amaze the most indifferent looker-on. Since the Pentecostal shower that descended upon the Master's chosen ones at Jerusalem, *what* had the world seen like unto this? As soon as they had recovered somewhat from the mighty power that held them, they broke forth as with one voice: "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord!" They continued shouting and praising until tired nature could hold out no longer. There have been many similar scenes, but, recalling the intense fervor of our Methodist fathers and mothers of those early days, one cannot help exclaiming with a zealous member of one of our large but lukewarm city churches: "O for the days of the good old-fashioned Methodist love-feasts!"

Methodism may be said to have really begun at this love-feast. Four days later, on the fifth of January, another "feast of love" was held at Islington. There the three itinerants "conferred together" with others, seven in all, concerning "matters of importance." Afterward they engaged in fasting and prayer and in sweet communion among themselves, during which a "deep conviction of their calling and a deep sense of power were given them." They finally closed the meeting with the conviction that God was about to do "great things" for them. Indeed he was! How great, let the mighty marching host of Methodism, now five and a half million strong, bear witness.



WHITEFIELD AND WESLEY AT KINGSWOOD COLLIERY.

ABOUT the middle of February, 1739, finding himself completely shut out from all the churches in both London and Bristol, Whitefield determined to proceed to the coal-mines at Kingswood, and there among the miners—at that time the most ignorant and degraded of all Englishmen—inaugurate his field-preaching in earnest.

Kingswood had been formerly what is known as a "royal chase"—that is, one of the hunting-grounds of the royal family. It was a magnificent estate, containing between three and four thousand acres. But some years previous to Whitefield's visit all these tracts of land had been gradually appropriated by the several greedy and autocratic lords whose estates surrounded Kingswood. The vast herds of deer that

formerly roamed across it had now entirely disappeared, either at the approach of more stirring life or as victims of the chase. Where the deer had ranged, and the hunters had feasted and made merrymery over some fine trophy, were now the deep and yawning mouths of coal-pits or the rude huts of the miners.

These miners were as low and degraded as could be imagined, differing in appearance and dialect from the members of the few old baronial families by which they were surrounded as the leaves of the cactus differ from those of the lordly oak. They had no schools, no house of worship, no religious belief—in short, no softening and refining influences of any kind. But worse than any of these, they were a most depraved and utterly reckless class of men. “Inconceivably barbarous and ignorant, they trampled on all laws, human and divine, and hesitated not to set the magistrates at defiance.” Murders and robberies were of such frequent occurrence that it had long since become exceedingly dangerous, even in open day, to pass near the scene of their labors.

These, then, were the people to whom the ardent and devoted Whitefield, with the flames of an immortal fire blazing within his heart and borne as though on the rushing wings of his Master’s love, had determined to become the first evangelist, the first to tell their sin-dyed souls of the all-cleansing power of a Saviour’s blood.

On February 17 he stood upon a gentle elevation on the south side of Kingswood, known as Hannam

Mount, and there, under an old sycamore made forever memorable, preached his first sermon to the colliers, two hundred in all. He could not see that much impression was made at this start. It was all so new, so startling, so incomprehensible to these well-nigh savage people. They heard in wonder—many in open and rude disapprobation.

But if this preaching failed to have its effect upon the colliers, it did not upon the rigid Church of England people, who caught all sorts of rumors in regard to it in their surrounding homes. They were not backward in expressing their chagrin and disgust. It was so unchurchly, such a shocking departure from all previous rules and usages! And Mr. Whitefield professing to be a clergyman of the Church of England, too! Who ever had heard of a clergyman being so “irregular” as to preach in the open air? As if there *could* be any religion *outside the churches!* All of which, we suppose, implied that the Lord would not reveal himself to his seekers *outside* the stuffy old recesses of the buildings peculiarly sanctified to his service through black-gowned ecclesiasts, vellum-bound prayer-books, and silk-robed devotees. But Whitefield, the zealous servant of his Master, the reverent and believing son of his heavenly Father, had a broader and more liberal opinion of his Lord than this. Assuredly the heavens were his throne and the earth his footstool, or else there was naught of truth in what his own Word declared.

At the second Kingswood service there were no less than two thousand hearers, for the colliers had

now brought their wives and children to listen to the man whose words thrilled them with a sensation different from any they had ever experienced. What a swelling of the ranks was this—an increase from two hundred to two thousand—and how the hand of the Lord seemed working in it all! At the third service there were fully four thousand, while at the fifth the four thousand had swelled into ten thousand. Whitefield had never preached with such affecting power. The very Spirit of the Lord seemed to breathe from his every utterance, while the force of his words was like that of the rushing winds that sweep all before them.

At first little order had been kept at these meetings, though strange to say, considering the character these men bore, there was no effort made to harm Whitefield. Under his preaching they seemed so little like the men they had been represented that one could scarcely believe that the hands of some of them were dyed with human blood. As bad as was their reputation, as desperate as many of them appeared, they had none of the malignancy of the London and Bristol mobs. Murderers though some of them were, and defiant violators of the law, they were yet not so hardened as to be untouched by the fearlessness and devotion of the man who cared so much for their poor lost souls as to face probable death to come and tell them of their condition. Truly, in the most unpromising material does the mighty leaven of God's wondrous love and power sometimes work the most astonishing results.

When the colliers first began to assemble at these meetings they would hoot at each other and make faces; then, as if moved by a common impulse, shout, "Hurrah! hurrah!" and stamp about in a spirit of reckless jollity. Again, they would bellow as if they were the veritable wild beasts they had been represented, or under the sweeping power of the preachers' burning words burst into tears and cry for pardon from their sins. Sometimes a most pathetic picture would be spoiled by the burly men comically poking one another in the ribs while their lips shouted "Halleluiah!" Indeed, the whole scene was a mixture of the comic and the tragic—a strange blending of such elements of good and evil as often mystified and perplexed even the hopeful Whitefield.

But hundreds of these poor creatures—ignorant, rude, debased as they were—were made happy in the knowledge of Christ. Standing unwashed, uncombed, just as they had come from the coal-pits, with their shovels and picks upon their shoulders, the sooty dust of their working-places covering their faces and begriming their hair, the tears making white gutters down their blackened cheeks, they listened to the story as old as the hills of the earth, and yet as ever new as the sun that greets us fair and radiant each morning that we wake. It was all new to them—this story of a loving and gentle Saviour who had come into the world to bear its crosses and persecutions for them, crowning the sacrifice at last with an agonized death that through that death they might find an entrance into life eternal. Who before had told

them of this Saviour? Who had thought enough of their miserable, lost condition to speak the words that were to make of their turbulent hearts the home of a faith most beautiful? And now came this man upon whose face they had never looked before, of whom they had never even heard; this man who regarded them not with horror and loathing, but with the eye of pity—ay, of love—who grasped them by the hand, dirt-stained, coal-begrimed, even blood-dyed as many of them were, and declared all men brothers, brothers in Christ Jesus. It is no wonder that they listened, repented, believed, and were saved. And yet this man who in a few short hours had done what all the black-gowned clergy of London and Bristol, yea, I might say of all England, had failed to do in years—brought scores of lost souls to Christ—was shut out from the churches, given the cold shoulder by their clergymen, denounced as a mischief-maker and fanatic, and called in derision a “Methodist.”

Finding the crowds to swell even far beyond the compass of his magnetic voice, Whitefield wrote for Wesley to come and help him. The latter began the journey the last of March, and after stopping at Bristol and other places by the way, reached Kingswood about the second week in April. The next day he stood upon the same rise of ground that Whitefield had occupied, and, facing an assembly which swelled into the thousands, gave forth to them the glad proclamation, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” How eager these thirsty souls

were to come was forcibly shown by their conscience-stricken faces as they pressed around him; by their trembling hands outstretched, as if merely to touch him would cause the living waters to flow; by the writhing forms prostrate upon the ground and crying out to the Lord for mercy. The scene stirred John Wesley's soul as no other had done, and caused the fountain of love within his heart to flow out in deeper streams toward his fallen fellow-men. It gave him a clearer insight into the work for which God was preparing him, and caused him to see how the lowest of earth's creatures might become wondrous examples of the power of God's redeeming love. Something else it did too, not exactly for Wesley, but for all England—that is, for such portions of England as heard the astounding story of the wholesale conversion of the Kingswood miners; this was to exhibit, in lines which the most blindly prejudiced could not fail to read, the undeniable evidence that the “revival of the Methodists” had a “transforming power” that was most unaccountable.

Seeing the power that Wesley had acquired over the miners, Whitefield now determined to leave them in his hands and make a journey into Wales. Before he left, however, a most impressive scene took place. In passing through Kingswood he was met by a large number of the colliers who entreated him to remain another day among them, as they had prepared an “entertainment” for him, and were also desirous of giving him subscriptions for a charity-school to be established in their midst. He remained not only

one day but several, during which the corner-stone of the building was laid. At the end of the ceremonies all present knelt upon the ground, while Whitefield, in his most impassioned tones, prayed that the gates of hell might not prevail against the enterprise. The "amens" of the colliers were hearty and vigorous.

The building of this school soon fell into Wesley's hands. He did his work well and faithfully, gaining the gratitude of the thousands of poor miners so deeply interested. Several years afterward he also founded at Kingswood, out of the receipts of his fellowship at Oxford, a school for the children of his itinerant ministers. It need scarcely be added that from that day to this Kingswood has been a sacred spot in Methodist history.

* * *

SCENES UNDER WESLEY'S PREACHING.

ESPECIALLY in the first year of Wesley's field-preaching many remarkable scenes occurred. And it is a noteworthy circumstance that while the preaching of both Whitefield and Charles Wesley was equally as faithful as that of John, and far more impassioned and eloquent, yet there were no such "signs" and demonstrations attending their efforts as those attending John Wesley's. He was himself at a loss to account for these demonstrations beyond the notion that a "strong, lively, and sudden apprehension of the heinousness of sin, the wrath of God, and the bitter pains of eternal death should affect the body as well as the soul."

But as these "bodily demonstrations" were to some extent experienced in the preaching of the others—many turning to Christ while loudly weeping, or beating upon their breasts in the agony of their souls' despair—we must look for something peculiarly Wesley's own in his style of preaching to produce results hitherto so unusual and astounding. In this search we shall not have far to go when we recall the quiet force of Wesley's bearing, the solemn power of his words, the clear, penetrating gaze of his eyes that seemed to read the innermost thought or send the shaft of conviction straight home to the mark. It was not surprising that those poor souls, torn with conviction or consumed by the raging fires of remorse, looked upon him not only as a powerful accuser but as a possible avenger. Rent with conflicting thoughts, lashed by the scorpion stings of conscience, it seemed that his calm, piercing eyes were upon them in whatever direction they turned, as if his words were burning into their very souls. Thus driven within themselves—shaken as by a spiritual earthquake, torn, distracted—they soon lost their self-control, and either swooned away or cried aloud in their anguish, distorting their faces or rending their clothes as if possessed of the very devils of which we read in the Bible. Another powerful characteristic of Wesley's preaching was that he made each person addressed feel that he was speaking to that one individually, as if he had purposely singled him out from the rest of the crowd.

On April 17, 1739, Wesley was preaching at Bald-

win street. At the close of one of his most forcible sermons upon the future state of the lost, he called upon God to confirm his words. Almost immediately a woman who stood near him began to utter sharp, piercing cries as though in the agonies of death, and finally fell prostrate before him. He at once began praying for her, and continued wrestling with God in prayer until "a new song was put in her mouth, even a thanksgiving unto the Lord." While he was praying two others began calling upon the Lord, groaning, crying, and beating themselves upon their breasts. Wesley prayed still more earnestly until they also "burst forth into praise to God their Saviour." Then another began to cry unto God for mercy as though "out of the very bowels of hell," Wesley tells us. He was a stranger in Bristol, but soon he too was "overwhelmed with joy and love."

On April 21, while Wesley was preaching, a young man was seized with violent trembling, and suddenly staggering fell as though smitten by a heavy hand. He lay motionless as one dead for some time, then regained consciousness, shouting God's praises. A week later, as Wesley was discoursing at Newgate, he suddenly called upon God to bear witness to his word. Forthwith one and another and another dropped down before him, until twenty or more lay as if stricken by the lightning's bolt. At Baldwin street on the first of May his voice could scarcely be heard for the groans and cries of those calling upon the Lord to save them. A Quaker stood by, showing his anger at these demonstrations by knitting his brows

and biting his lips. Directly he too dropped as if impelled downward by some powerful force. The agony he was in Wesley describes as "most terrible to behold," but as soon as they prayed with him he lifted his head in joy and shouted aloud.

A forcible incident recorded at this time is that of John Haydon, a weaver. He was a man of irreproachable life morally, and a regular attendant upon the sacrament and other Church services. He was present in Baldwin street when so many fell before Wesley as if lightning had struck them; and when the hitherto irate and unbelieving Quaker changed into the convicted and shouting one, Haydon was loud in his denunciation of the whole scene, declaring it was all "a delusion of the devil." But the next day, while reading one of Wesley's sermons, "Salvation by Faith," he suddenly changed color, fell off his chair, and began screaming and beating himself against the floor. When Wesley, who was sent for, came into his presence, Haydon cried out: "Ay, this is he I said deceived the people; but God has overtaken me! I said it was a delusion of the devil, but *this* is no delusion." Then he roared out: "O thou devil! thou cursed devil!—yea, thou legion of devils!—thou canst not stay in me; Christ will cast thee out! I know his work is begun! Tear me in pieces, if thou wilt, but thou canst not hurt me!" He then beat himself violently upon the floor, tearing his clothes, while his breast heaved as though rent by the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickled from his face. Wesley began praying for

him fervently. In a short while the throes of the tortured one ceased, and "both his body and soul were set at liberty." A few days later Wesley, returning to see him, found that he had lost his voice, while his body was as weak as that of an infant; but his soul was in peace, full of love, and "rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God."

Once a young woman became so powerfully convicted under Wesley's preaching that she sprung up and fled to her home, feeling herself unable to longer meet the gaze of those clear and searching eyes, and not caring to "expose herself" by shouting out in the meeting. But, although she had run out from under the eyes of Wesley, she had not escaped those of the All-seeing One nor the whisperings of his Spirit. In the street she uttered the very cries and shoutings from which she had fled, and after exhausting herself fell upon the ground senseless, and had to be carried home. When consciousness again returned, her lamentations and entreaties for mercy broke forth afresh. She was in a sore way, and would have died but for Wesley's praying and singing with her, which soon brought her tortured soul into the fullness of peace.

"On October 23," says Wesley, "I was pressed to visit a young woman at Kingswood. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. Anguish, horror, and despair above all description appeared in her face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing at her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be en-

dured. She screamed out: 'I am damned, damned, lost forever! Six days ago you might have helped me, but it is past! I am the devil's now; I have given myself to him; I am his; him I must serve; with him must I go to hell; I cannot be saved; I will not be saved; I must, I will, I *will* be damned!' She then began praying to the devil. We began, 'Arm of the Lord, awake! awake!' She immediately sunk down as asleep, but as soon as we left off broke out again with inexpressible vehemence. . . . We continued in prayer until past eleven, when God in a moment spoke peace to her soul."

"Four days later," he further writes, "I was sent for to go to Kingswood again to one of those who had been so ill before. A violent rain began just as I set out. Just at that time the woman—three miles off—cried out, 'Yonder comes Wesley galloping as fast as he can!' When I was come she burst into a horrid laugh and said: 'No power, no power! no faith, no faith! She is *mine*! her soul is *mine*! I have her, and will not let her go!' Meanwhile her pangs increased more and more. . . . One who was clearly convinced that this was no natural disorder said, 'I think Satan is let loose; I fear he will not stop here;' and added, 'I command thee in the name of the Lord Jesus to tell if thou hast commission to torment any other soul.' It was immediately answered: 'I have; L—y C—r and S—h J—s.' We betook ourselves to prayer again, and ceased not until she began with a clear voice and composed, cheerful look to sing, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.'"

At this time L——y C——r and S——h J——s were in perfect health, and living some distance away; yet Wesley writes the next day:

“October 28.—I called at Mrs. J——s’s at Kingswood. L——y C——r and S——h J——s were there. It was scarce a quarter of an hour before the former fell into a strange agony, and presently after, the latter. The violent convulsions all over their bodies were such as words cannot describe. Their cries and groans were horrid to be borne. We poured out our souls before God until L——y C——r’s agonies so increased that it seemed she was in the pangs of death. But in a moment God spoke, and both her body and soul were healed.”

Perhaps the most marvelous case of all was that which occurred on November 30, “when seven persons were grievously tormented; and Wesley and his friends continued in prayer from the time of evening service till nine o’clock next morning, or about fifteen hours—a case almost unparalleled in the history of the Church.”

No wonder the Lord of harvests gave such rich results, when those who tended the whitened fields were so steadfast in endurance, so abundant in faith!

* * *

THE FIRST METHODIST CHAPEL.

THE corner-stone for the first Methodist chapel in the world was laid at Bristol, England, on May 12, 1739. By this time several “societies” had been organized at London and Bristol, and at other places.

Gradually the followers of Wesley and Whitefield had withdrawn from the Moravian societies and formed those exclusively their own. Wesley heartily approved of this movement, although he did not take the final step of separating from his German brethren until a year later. Many of the beliefs embodied in the Moravian doctrine he had found it impossible to accept, and hence thought it far better to quietly withdraw than to come to the open rupture of a discussion. But doubtless one of the chief causes of this separation was in the openly avowed doctrine of these Moravians that in "true stillness" dwelt the highest religious attainment. To shout, therefore, and to cry out under the fervor of intense religious feeling, as so many of the Methodists were doing, was viewed with much horror by their "still-tongued brethren." But notwithstanding Wesley gave his sanction to the withdrawal of his people from the Moravian societies, and afterward came out himself, he still remembered these brethren with the most grateful emotions; for what did he not owe them?

This year, then (1739), which marked the springing into existence of these separate societies may properly be called the birth-year of Methodism, and is so accepted by Methodists everywhere.

The corner-stone of the first chapel of these Methodist societies was laid with the "voice of praise and thanksgiving." The structure was near to St. James Church-yard, in what was known as "The Horse-fair," and was for many years called "The New Room," and after that "The Old Room, Bristol."

The name "chapel" then signified a house erected for public worship, but not having "the full character of a church," just as the Methodist societies were not accorded the "full character" of a religious sect. But in spite of this limitation the "societies" continued to increase in numbers and influence.

Although the Bristol chapel was the first to be built, another structure bears the honor of being really the "cradle of Methodism," since it was the first opened for worship. It may therefore in all justness be called "The First Methodist Chapel." This last was the old half-ruined building in Moorfields which the Government had used as a foundry for casting cannon. It had been unoccupied for twenty years, and was fast falling into decay. The story of its desertion was that in recasting the guns "taken from the French in the campaigns of Marlborough a terrible explosion blew off the roof, shook the building, and killed several of the workmen." It was consequently abandoned, and the royal foundry removed to Woolwich.

Two strangers, who had been well impressed by the preaching of some of the Methodist missionaries, came to Wesley and asked him to preach in this deserted building, offering if he would do so to aid him in fitting it up. Mr. Wesley accepted their offer, and on November 11, 1739, it was for the first time opened for service. We can well imagine what a glad day that was for the good people who had long been worshiping in the open air, with the canopy of heaven alone for their covering.

The opening of this chapel was considered as the true epoch of Methodism; and on the same day of the present century—that is, in 1839—the Centennial of Methodism was observed with appropriate ceremonies throughout the different countries in which it had become so great a power.

The building which had once composed the royal foundry, but was now transformed into a Methodist chapel, stood near to where Finsbury Square, London, now is. Behind it was the parsonage in which Mr. Wesley lived when in London, where his mother soon came to reside with him, and where three years later was witnessed that glorious death-bed scene which sent her sons forth newly equipped for the contest before them.

Leading from Mr. Wesley's house to the church was a passage through which he could enter the chapel unseen from the outside. On one side of the chapel was a school-room for the children, and on the other side two rooms, in one of which books were kept for sale, the other being set apart for charitable purposes. The interior of the foundry was fitted up very much after the fashion of a church, while on the outside it had the old grim, queer look. The building was of brick, and about one hundred and twenty feet long by ninety-five in width. The seating capacity of the part used as a chapel was fifteen hundred. All the benches were without backs except about "a dozen seats with back-rails for the weaker women in front." At the top of the building there was a bell which was rung every morning before

preaching at five o'clock, and as a summons also to the other services. How different the hours kept then by these devout Methodists from those kept now! As there were at that day no lamps in that part of London, how impressive must have been the sight as on the dark winter mornings these faithful worshipers, with their lanterns, made their way to the services! And how deeply solemn the scene on the inside when the quiet and orderly congregation took their places and bowed their heads in fervent waiting upon God!

In the year in which the old Foundry Church was opened for service there came into being what were known as "The Bands." These were companies of converted men set to watch over and inspire the faith of other men and women. It was their duty to meet once each week, calling the band together, and engage with them in services of prayer and song and in the telling of individual experiences. These gatherings are now known as "class-meetings" wherever the followers of John Wesley have zealously kept their Methodist faith.

How deep and soul-stirring were some of the scenes at these "band-meetings!" There "the rich and the poor met together" in holy, happy communion; there the hand of fainting, discouraged brother or sister was warmly grasped and words of cheer and comfort spoken. There, like the members of one loving, happy family they met to strengthen one another against the snares of sin, and to pray for renewed grace from the one Father of them all. It was a

moving power—a warm, inspiriting force wisely put into operation and deeply felt almost from the beginning of the religious movement known as Methodism, and which to this day has given to it abiding strength.

As to the old church itself—the cradle in which the infant Methodism first threw off its swaddling-clothes and lay in the white and glistening purity of its christening-robcs—most gracious is the memory of it that remains! It was here that the fire of John Wesley's preaching, the impassioned sweetness of Charles Wesley's exhortations, and the smiting force of Whitefield's eloquence laid out sinners before them as the sweeping winds lay the burdened sheaves. It was here that many faithful soldiers were won to the great King and sent forth to battle for him; here that the first Conference of Methodism met to knit more firmly the tie that bound their hearts together in Christian love; and here that Susanna Wesley, the "Mother of Methodism," while partaking of the holy communion, first *felt* that witness of God's Spirit with her own spirit which made her testify so gloriously to the joys of *free* salvation.



WESLEY AND BEAU NASH.

THE wholesale conversion of the miserable colliers of Kingswood raised a storm of persecution throughout England. Not only was all manner of evil spoken against the preachers, both in private and public, but Wesley himself tells us that the people were

everywhere stirred up against them and aroused to the fierceness of wild, ungovernable beasts. On every side was heard the cry, "Knock the mad dogs on the head!" To add still further to the harrowing situation, when complaint was made of this savage violence, no magistrate could be found who would do them justice. "We were assaulted and abused on every side," says Wesley. "We were everywhere represented as mad dogs, and treated accordingly. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds we were painted as unheard-of monsters. But this moved us not; we went on testifying salvation by faith both to small and great, and not counting our lives dear unto ourselves so we might finish our course with joy."

At Penford the curate's excuse for not letting Wesley preach in his church was that he had heard he was mad, and he did not care to have his congregation imbibing the sentiments of a madman. Wesley, undaunted, took his stand in the open air and began the services with one of those soul-inspiring songs which he and his gifted brother left as a rich legacy to our Methodism. All was quiet during the singing, but in the midst of the prayer that followed two men, hired expressly for the purpose, began to sing light, worldly ballads in their loudest voice. This caused Mr. Wesley and his followers to sing their hymns in tones equally loud. For nearly an hour the battle of the notes waged with increasing energy and determination on both sides. Then these noisy,

brawling singers of the world, being overcome by the masterful harmony of those who sung in the Lord's praise, or put to rout by the unconquerable vim of the "preaching man" and his followers, gave up the fight and crept off like beaten curs.

At Bath Wesley met with a "difficulty" of another sort. Bath was a fashionable watering-place, and at that time it was crowded with visitors. Among these was a celebrated fop, Beau Nash by name, who not only "set the fashion for men's clothes, but also prescribed it for the ladies." This man was one of the most vicious of his day, yet he was smiled upon and courted by all those fashionable people, and looked up to as the grand master of ceremonies on every occasion, if it were only a light dance or a bumper drank to royal health. All of which goes to show that so-called "fashionable society" is a very loose, disjointed thing indeed. We may well believe that all this homage and flattery rendered Beau Nash a very self-conceited and pompous fellow. In fact, the cut of his clothes alone conveyed the impression of a man pretty well assured of his own importance.

Hearing of Wesley's proposed visit to Bath, Beau publicly gave out that he meant to meet "the preaching fellow" and crush and mortify him in the presence of all the people. This widely uttered and boastful threat had the effect of bringing together on the day of Wesley's appointment by far the largest audience of purely fashionable people to whom he had yet preached. But this only gave him the broader opportunity; "for," said he, "I told them the

Scripture had concluded them all under sin, high and low, rich and poor, one with another."

Previous to Wesley's visit to Bath some of his more timid friends, who had heard of Beau Nash's boast, tried to dissuade him from going, fearing not only mortification for him, but insult as well. But the man who had faced the sticks and stones of infuriated mobs, who had been beaten, bruised, and even trampled upon, was not the one to fall back now at the boastful words of a consequential dandy.

Wesley was well started in his discourse, and was noting with inward surprise and satisfaction that many of those present were just "sinking apace into seriousness," when Beau, in his immense white hat, wide ruffles, and gold-embroidered waistcoat, came edging his way through the crowds until he stood directly in front of the preacher.

"By what authority, sir," he demanded of Wesley, "do you do what you are doing?"

Fixing his piercing blue eyes full upon him—those eyes that could glitter like the clear, cold luster of steel or express the softened tenderness of a smiling sky, those eyes that days later on Moorfields Common by one look sent the shaft of conviction home to the soul of the poor dream-haunted, sin-lashed John Nelson—Wesley calmly returned: "By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by him who is now Archbishop of Canterbury when he laid his hands upon me and said, 'Take thou the authority to preach the gospel.'"

"But this," returned the somewhat disconcerted

Beau, "is a conventicle,* and contrary to act of Parliament."

"No," returned Wesley, still steadily looking him in the eye, "conventicles are seditious meetings; but here is no sedition—therefore it is not contrary to act of Parliament."

"But I say it is!" almost shouted this "bedecked hero of Bath," trying to confuse the unflinching gaze of those blue eyes; "and, besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits."

"Sir," questioned Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?"

"No," admitted Beau.

"Well then, how can you judge of what you never heard?"

"I judge by common report."

"Common report is not enough. Give me leave to ask you, sir, is not your name Nash?"

"It is," replied the fast-wilting Beau.

"Well then, sir, I dare not judge of *you* by common report; I think it not enough to judge by." Here Wesley fixed upon him a look that was sufficient to pierce him through and through, and kept it there till Nash, after trying to stammer out a few words, was overcome with confusion and slunk away.

It was by just such fearless tactics that the founder of the Methodist faith vanquished the emissaries of Satan.

* A name formerly applied by way of reproach to an assembly or meeting of English Non-conformists—that is, those who had broken away from the forms of the Established Church.

"THE WORLD IS MY PARISH."

STANDING upon the summit of Hannam Mount, Kingswood Colliery, John Wesley had earnestly and fearlessly announced to the thirsting multitudes the gracious invitation of the loving Master: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink!" As he stood looking out upon the listening thousands "so calmly joined together in solemn waiting upon God," or as the winter evening drew on apace and the thousands still kept their places as one man, all hanging upon his words or all "alike affected and drenched in tears together," many and varied feelings struggled for the mastery. He thought of himself, of his career at Oxford, of the sheafless time passed as his father's curate, of his conversation with the "serious man," of his return to the University, of his joining the "Holy Club," of the days he had spent in bearing about a lamp which, like those of the foolish virgins, merely smoked without burning, and then of the glad, joyous, radiant time when the oil had been suddenly poured into the lamp and it had blazed with a flame that illumined all the way. Then came thoughts of his pure and earnest desire to herald the glad tidings abroad, of his honest efforts to labor faithfully in his Master's vineyard, of his fond hope that from a Church and clergy acknowledging Christ as its divine Governor he would receive only welcome and encouragement in his endeavors to proclaim that same Christ as the very Fountain-head of all pure religion. But alas! he had been barred from its pulpits, censured by its

clergy, and denounced by its people. He had been called by all the vile epithets in the vocabulary of mean and bigoted natures. And why had it been so? For what was he thus maltreated and abused? Of what terrible sin had he been guilty, that his Church should exclude him from her communions? He had simply cut loose from the old outward forms and formalities of a half-hearted religion, and declared openly for one that had in it the very spirit of Him whence it sprung.

Let us briefly go over what John Wesley believed, the things which he desired to teach in all their untainted wholesomeness. He believed, first, that a rigid conformity to the rules of the Established Church, good works, and even charity, might exist without religion—that is, without that pure religion that springs alone from the love of Christ in the heart. Second, that this genuine religion could be gained only through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Third, that this faith in Christ, this “heartly surrender and unfaltering trust,” this “taking God at his word,” brings to the soul a surer knowledge of its acceptance with God. This is all that man can do; the rest is with God. Fourth, that as a result of this faith, this acceptance with God, man has in this world “a taste of the heaven to which he is going, and is made happy and to rejoice and praise God often with loud halleluiahs by a power that is in him and yet not of him.”

This is a simple, sound platform, upon which all men might stand — Christian, Pagan, and Jew; a

clear yet liberal faith which all might trustingly accept—the very heart and soul and marrow of the Christian doctrine as Christ had himself declared it seventeen hundred years before. And yet, for preaching the very truths which his divine Master had proclaimed before him, this man had been denounced as an alien and a traitor by those calling themselves his fellow-disciples in Christ! As his eyes rested upon the pathetic picture of the tear-drenched thousands imploring to be fed with the bread eternal, it is no wonder that these thoughts should have surged through his heart as the waves of a turbulent sea, or that in following them his soul should have gone out to these stricken spirits in a yearning that for the time quite overcame him. In thinking of this time afterward, and of the emotions which swayed him on that occasion, he uttered the memorable words that have been the grand trumpet-call of Methodism through the century and a half that its hosts have marched on to the possession of the waste places of the earth: “I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. . . . I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean that in whatever part of it I am I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation.”

“The world is my parish!” Broad, liberal, consecrated, soul-enkindling Christian words. From the doors of their churches they had turned the man who uttered them, and in derision they called him “a Methodist.” “A Methodist?” What term of re-

proach did the name imply? If to call one a Methodist was because he had the love of Jesus flaming in his heart, then in truth he was a Methodist. If to be a Methodist was to crave to tell others of the fire burning within, to desire to lead them out of the chill and gloom of the night into the warmth and radiance of their Father's mansion, then most assuredly he was a Methodist. If to yearn over every man as his brother, to long to penetrate the uttermost ends of the earth carrying the tidings of great joy, then beyond a doubt the name was deserved.

"The world is my parish!" Grand words with which to inspire the loyal spirits that were to come after! Glorious sentiment with which to enkindle the fires of brotherly love and Christian devotion! Born amidst the yearning throbs of John Wesley's soul as he gazed upon the tear-stricken thousands pressing around him at Hannam Mount, it grew into something more than a mere sentiment, into an ever-living presence. It carried him into the heart of papist-cursed Ireland; it went with him into the mountain fastnesses of Wales; it remained beside him when on the Scottish moors he stood contending with "the prejudices of man and the evil spirit of the devil." It sustained him in the presence of hooting mobs; it eased the pain of fiendish blows; it took the sting from scorn, the hurt from persecution, and it ever brought him nearer the great Father of all.

"The world is my parish!" Sentiment or inspiration, mistaken fire or divinely enkindled flame—

whichever it might be, or by whatsoever name it might be called—the symptoms, like the “boasted fixedness of Rome,” were “always and everywhere the same.” It burned within George Whitefield’s heart as the good ship bore him on his mission to the Indians in the wild Western Continent; it whispered divinely in his ear of hundreds of helpless orphan children for whom a home might be provided; it carried him overflowing with zeal to his glorious work in the Kingswood collieries, and blazed in his eyes and surged in his heart as he went to face the half-drunken and half-mad rabble of Vanity Fair.

“The world is my parish!” It rung in the clarion utterances of the unquenchable young spirits who heard the call from the wilds of America and with a heroism worthy of the old martyr days cried, “Here I am! send *me!*” It carried Francis Asbury to America; it cheered his soul in the midst of hardships sufficient to appall a hero’s heart; it went with him in the two hundred and seventy thousand miles traveled through a wild, inhospitable country, that the joy of the Master’s words might ring as a glad voice through all the wilderness places; it glowed as a brilliant flame amidst the vigils of dreary nights that he spent alone in the forests of the savage; it warmed his heart against the icy currents, and leaped “a fire divine” as in the mud of the Carolina swamps he knelt to pray with the negro ferryman. It bore Thomas Coke eighteen times across the Atlantic; it gave him the faith and the grace to firmly endure unto the end, sending him at seventy years of age,

burning with missionary zeal for India, to find a grave in the bosom of the Indian Ocean.

“The world is my parish!” From then till now it has run as a vitalizing current through the veins of hundreds of good and true men and women who, laying all aside, have answered the call from stricken lands across the sea. It has unstopped the ears of long-dulled indifference, awakened the hearts that slept the entranced sleep of the Brahmans, and sent them, all glowing with the Master’s zeal, a willing sacrifice upon the altar of missionary consecration.

“The world is my parish!” It sends the hand deep down into the pockets to bring forth the needed dollars more freely. It gives fresh bread in greater abundance to the hungry poor, and consigns the musty loaf to its rightful place among the slops of the kitchen.

Yes, “sentiment or inspiration, mistaken fire or divinely enkindled flame,” whichever it may be, it ever dwells within the hearts of those who, irrespective of Church or creed, truly love Him who is the Maker of all.

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WHITEFIELD AT MOORFIELDS COMMON.

RETURNING to London from his journey into Wales, his heart still aglow with the zeal that had carried him as an evangelist to the miserable colliers of Kingswood, Whitefield now determined to lift up his voice in some of the many haunts of sin in and around the great city. Prominent among these was Moorfields, a large common just without the limits

of the "old north city wall." A few years before it attracted Whitefield's attention it had been an extensive marsh, which was altogether impassable during a greater part of the year; but since that time it had been partly drained, and at one side a brick-kiln had been erected. Here, it is said, the first bricks used in London were made. After this the field was still further drained, and was next used as a practice-ground for some of the archery clubs of the city. Subsequently it was laid out into walks, and given the name of the City Mall. At the time Whitefield was regarding it as a suitable place in which to attack the powers of darkness, it had become a general rallying-ground where, on Sundays especially, the worst elements of the city engaged in revels of the most shameful sort. There were wrestlers, boxers, mountebanks, puppet-showmen, exhibitors of wild beasts, harlequins, drummers, trumpeters—in short, the idle, the dissolute, and the profane in every conceivable character; and all at such times plying their different vocations and making the scene hideous with their uproar. It was, in fact, one of the very strongholds of Satan; and what more natural than that the ardent Whitefield should long to storm it with one of his raking broadsides? With him to desire was to act.

Accordingly, one day all London rung with the announcement that the Rev. George Whitefield was to preach the day following, Sunday, at Moorfields Common. Such an announcement, new and singular as it was, would of itself have been sufficient to attract

an unusual crowd; but when added to this was the well-known reputation of the preacher, it is no wonder that on descending from his coach at the time appointed his eye rested upon such an audience as he had seen but once or twice before. Many of his friends met him and tried to dissuade him from preaching in such a rabble, informing him that they had heard it frequently asserted that if he dared do such a thing he should never come out alive. He was firm, however, and started in between two of his friends, who declared that they intended to remain with him through every thing. But the pressure of the crowd was so great they were soon parted from him, and, after making vigorous efforts to regain his side, were finally forced back and compelled to leave him at the mercy of the rabble. Cool and collected, Whitefield held his place in their midst—his clear eyes boldly scanning the sea of stormy faces on every side. But, despite the threats, there was no movement to do him harm. Instead, they formed a sort of lane for him, and pressed him onward to a table that had been placed near the center of the field. Just as he was on the point of mounting this, it was broken in pieces by the crowd that surged about him, he himself being pushed backward toward a wall that divided upper and lower Moorfields. He took advantage of this, and, ascending the wall, soon had the noisy multitudes in an order “as decorous as in a church.” His melting tones of eloquence drew tears and groans from some of the most hardened of those present. He was often interrupted

by the piercing cries of those awakened to the realization of their lost condition. His thrilling voice could be heard for nearly a mile.

Having gained the field, he held it and continued preaching, as he himself tells us, until his clothes were dripping with perspiration. And this was on a cold winter's day, in January, 1739!

Whitefield came to Moorfields Common again and again. Sometimes his audience was estimated to number thirty-five or forty thousand. Often their singing could be heard for two miles. But others besides the rabble flocked to hear, many of the wealthiest people of London coming out in their carriages or on horseback. Whitefield took advantage of such occasions to raise collections for various charities, chief among which was his orphan-house in Georgia. His carriage was often so overloaded with the coin that was poured into it that it was difficult for him to find a sitting-place within. On a memorable occasion he was given by the common people alone twenty pounds—about one hundred dollars in our money—in half-pennies. They formed a load impossible for one man to bear away.

In March, 1741, Whitefield preached at Moorfields for the first time on a week-day, on Good Friday. He had a more quiet audience than that to which he had been used to preach on Sundays; but it was none the less attentive, nor did he preach with any less vim and fire. It was this occasion that led some kindly disposed persons who noted the inconvenience to which both audience and preacher were put, as

well as their exposure—for the day was cold and rainy—to procure the loan of a piece of ground on which they erected a temporary shed. In time this building was extended so as to shelter the largest audiences. Whitefield gave to this rude structure the name of “The Tabernacle.” Subsequently it made way for a more pretentious building of brick, which retained the old name. This latter building, which was capable of seating *four thousand people*, was often crowded to suffocation. It was the scene of many of Whitefield’s greatest triumphs. Here the Wesleys also preached after the reconciliation with Whitefield; and here, at the close of a service, occurred the memorable scene in which twelve hundred took the Lord’s Supper from the hands of Wesley and Whitefield. In time thousands came to bless the day the Tabernacle was erected.

But the greatest triumph of Whitefield at Moorfields was at Whitsuntide, when he stood contending with “the very powers of hell” concentrated against him. It has been pronounced such a day as has not been known in “all the Christian centuries.” The day had been advertised as one of general sport. Many new attractions were on the bills: a celebrated wrestler, engaged specially for the occasion; a tight-rope dancer, to air her accomplishments and graces for the first time before a London audience; and so on through the numerous specifications. Rising at day-break, so as to be fresh for the battle, Whitefield reached the grounds at six o’clock. At that early hour not less than ten thousand people were gath-

ered, waiting for the sports to begin. Selecting a prominent stand, Whitefield boldly erected a field-pulpit and began to attract the attention of the surging multitude by singing. "I was determined," he says, "to gain the start of the devil," and surely he did, for none of the sports had yet begun. The song finished, he commenced to preach. In a little while it was as he had hoped—he had the whole multitude around him hanging on his words. At noon, after having allowed himself but little time for rest and refreshment, he returned to the battle. By this time fully thirty thousand people had assembled on the field. "It was," he says, "in full possession of Beelzebub." The noise of their mingled voices sounded as the roar of the angry sea. The showmen and performers were either stalking about in their costumes, making noisy sounds on various instruments to attract the crowd and advertise their business, or else were "furiously plying" their different vocations.

"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" was the text chosen by Whitefield, and most masterfully did he handle it. Never did soldier enter into the battle-charge with more chivalric daring. To-day or never must the stronghold be stormed, and to its center! Clearly and boldly he told them of their condition through sin, and of their final damnation if they did not turn from their evil way. Furiously the battle waged. It was a serious thing to stand before those people and tell them of their sins, to denounce the shameful course they were pursuing; but Whitefield

had the courage to do it, even though death might follow at any moment. "Then they threw stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and dead cats at me," says he; but undismayed he kept on, his full broadsides of raining shot making the dry bones of sin rattle with ghastly significance. "My soul was among lions," he says again; and truly it was. Most gladly would they have devoured him, but the spirit of the great Master in whose cause he battled upheld him, and he remained unharmed till the lions were "turned into lambs."

At six o'clock in the evening he was again in his place, freshly resolved to push the fight until Satan's ensigns should lie trampled in the dust. Never did more heroic resolve move a human heart! never did knight go forth to the fray more grandly equipped! Strong in the might of God, he feared not the onset of the most desperate foe. "I came," he says, "and I saw—but what? Thousands upon thousands more than before." Ah, but Satan was indeed present in hot wrath! "The very fires of hell" seemed to surge around him. His ringing voice disturbed a harlequin performing near. He leaped down and rushed toward Whitefield with fists clinched threateningly, but was forced back by the crowd. Then another comic performer, who with many others had been loud in complaint that "this man was ruining their business," got upon the shoulders of another man, and forcing a passage toward Whitefield endeavored to strike him upon the head with a long, heavy whip; but he was so carried away with anger that he missed

his calculation and tumbled headlong into the crowd from the force of his own exertion.

The mob now began to throw all kinds of missiles—stones, dirt, dead rats, rotten eggs, bones, and even glass bottles. But few of these struck Whitefield, and only such as did no harm. Oftener they struck and hurt others in the crowd, especially those behind him. Seeing this, they determined to engage the services of a recruiting sergeant and his file of men who chanced to be upon the ground. Instructions were given the sergeant to march back and forth in front of Whitefield with drum and fife, each instrument making as much noise as possible. As the sergeant, his men, and the “attendant train of stragglers” neared his pulpit-stand, Whitefield shrewdly cried, “Make way for the king’s officer!” At these words the crowd at once pressed apart, leaving a lane in their midst through which marched the sergeant and his train “with his little pomp and circumstance.” As they moved on the ranks closed behind them, so that in a little while they were entirely out of hearing, while in front of Whitefield was again an unbroken audience.

Disappointed in their aims, that portion of the crowd who were determined to put the preacher down at all hazards now assembled on the margin of the fields, and “roaring like wild beasts” formed a solid and grim-visaged column. Their object was to sweep through the crowd, catch up the preacher and bear him away with them. They pressed into service again the sergeant with his great drum, while in their

midst was a long pole borne aloft as a standard. With the loud beating of the drum and wild shouts on they came. But they had not advanced far when they began to quarrel among themselves—then came blows, and finally a regular *mêlée*. The pole was dropped, the crowd scattered, each man seeking to save himself by getting out of the way. Among the first to desert its post, with little order in going, was the imposing head of the column, with the sergeant and the big drum. Some even went over to “the besieged party,” and stood about Whitefield listening to his words.

Directly there arose a tumult like the “sound of many waters.” It was the lost ones, aroused to a sense of their guilt and weeping over their sins, or calling aloud to God in their agony. The sounds swelled until they drowned even Whitefield’s clarion voice. Then he began to sing until “the host was hushed to hear.” So he continued, still holding his ground, “now preaching, now praying, and now singing, until night came upon the field.” He then went to the Tabernacle, where “the voice of rejoicing and praise was lifted up for the victory of the day.” And it was such a victory as to make Satan and his hosts tremble with dismay; for the “vice and misery of London,” the very dregs of those “born to crime,” were bravely faced in their wildest mood and in the midst of their most abandoned carousing, and shaken with a firm hand until they stood out even before their own eyes the wretched, lost creatures they were.

As one proof of the glorious work accomplished

that day, Whitefield received no less than *a thousand notes* from those convicted of sin, entreating his prayers and beseeching to know what further to do to be saved. Of these, three hundred were taken into his Society at one time. Assuredly such a day with such an ending sent a glad halleluiah all along the line of the faithful.

* * *

THE MAD METHODIST.

AMONG the earlier converts to Whitefield's preaching was a young man named Joseph Periam. His first conviction had come through reading a sermon of the great evangelist on "Regeneration." It so startled the young man that he prayed long and fervently at all hours and in all sorts of places; he besought God with loud cries to have mercy upon him; he fasted days at a time, till his family, believing that he had gone deranged, had him put in the Bedlam mad-house. Here he received the name of "The Mad Methodist," and was treated accordingly. The keepers threw him down and forced a key into his mouth, while they "drenched him with medicine." Again, they would fasten him down upon his cot so that he could not move hand nor foot. Finally they placed him in a cold, damp room where there was no floor save the ground, and no windows. In short, they were fast forcing him to his death when Periam managed to get a letter to Whitefield, and he at once came to the rescue. A few moments in Periam's presence convinced him that the young man was no

more mad than he was himself—only suffering from a tortured state of mind brought on through conviction of sin.

Taking with him one of his friends—a Mr. Seward—Whitefield went before the committee of the hospital to explain the case and to petition for the young man's release. The scene is described as both exasperating and ridiculous. Among other things, Seward so astounded the committee by quoting Scripture that they declared him as mad as Periam, and wanted to confine him also in the asylum. The result of this interview was that the committee frankly told the doctors of the hospital that Whitefield and all his followers were but a lot of madmen. However, it was at length arranged that if Whitefield would take Periam out of England he would be released. This arrangement was made, and Periam went with Whitefield to the new colony of Georgia, where he became an exemplary and useful man, a sincere Christian, and an honored officer of Mr. Whitefield's orphan-home. At his death he left two sons, who were likewise highly respected, and who became teachers in the institution.

* * *

THE SEPARATION OF WHITEFIELD AND WESLEY.

IN 1741 occurred that ever-to-be-regretted scene when Whitefield and Wesley, like Paul and Barnabas of old, "parted asunder." It was while on a visit to America, especially during his stay in New England, that Whitefield began to lean toward the more rigid doctrines of Calvinism in which

a limited atonement is made a fundamental dogma of faith. Letters frequently passed between the two, even while Whitefield was in America, but the open rupture did not come until March, 1741, when the two met in London—Whitefield firmly rooted in the belief that the plan of God's atonement was limited, and only an elect few were to share in his salvation; and Wesley burning with the faith that divine grace was open to *all* through repentance, even to the vilest sinner. On many other matters "the great orator" and the "great organizer" were of one mind and heart, but alas! upon this, the most vital question of all, they were as widely apart as the poles. "Faith, pardon, renewal, holiness, and the witness of the Spirit"—these things they both believed and earnestly proclaimed from their pulpits.

The acceptance of this doctrine of "sovereign grace" had come to Whitefield more as an instinct than any thing else; he had never stopped to reason it out, to weigh the whys and wherefores of God's saving only a part of his children and leaving the rest to be damned. If he had done so, how different might have been the result! Influenced by scenes which he daily witnessed, he jumped at conclusions, as so many have done before him, and as many will yet do while the world stands. He declared that he saw multitudes unsaved who were "by nature as good as himself." He did not reflect that this was because they either did not care to be saved or did not make the proper effort. He constantly asked himself,

“Why should I have salvation unless by the special grace of election?” And what made the joy, the hope within him if not the knowledge that he would in the end come off conqueror through final perseverance?

Of man’s free-will, of his power either to accept or reject this “pearl of great price,” Whitefield made stout denial. It left too much power in the hands of the creature, he argued, and tended to make the Creator depart from the high official function invested in him through the divine majesty of the Godhead, in that he became the one to accept and not to reject.

It was not so much predestination that Whitefield held as “election by grace”—that is, that even before the foundation of the world “God had chosen a certain number of his creatures and set them apart as elected unto him, to be justified, sanctified, and finally brought into his kingdom through saving grace.”

With Wesley it was different. He did not depend upon either instinct or impression, but upon the clear conviction obtained through a calm and logical reasoning. In short, he was a logician, which Whitefield, alas! with all his deep learning and magic eloquence, was not. And this doctrine of particular redemption Wesley had held under the microscopic glasses of patient research and deep study. To him it seemed that this principle of a limited atonement, this denying of salvation to some and bestowing it as a free gift upon others, was totally at variance with

the compassionate love of Him who had come into the world that "*whosoever* believed in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." All teaching of the New Testament was in direct opposition to a doctrine so contracted, so unjust, so plainly in conflict with a divine nature. "Come unto me, *all* ye that labor and are heavy-laden," this gracious, *universal* Saviour had said, "and I will give you rest." Again, the Word of God declared: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us *all*, how shall he not with him also *freely* give us all things?"

"The grace or love of God," held Wesley, "whence cometh our salvation, is *free in all*, and *free for all*"—yes, free through him who had given his Son *to die for all*, and with him "*freely* given all things." Therefore, if any man was not saved, it was his own fault, since God had made him *free* to choose as he pleased. Truly it was a *universal* call:

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesus' guest:
You need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden *all mankind!*

That was a sad meeting between Wesley and Whitefield which took place on the latter's return to England, for Whitefield was far from being in an amiable mood. He went to the undue extent of telling Mr. Wesley, who had come simply to make a friendly call upon him, that as they now preached two widely different doctrines he could no longer join with him or even give him the right-hand of fellowship. His ardent temperament led him for a time to consider

the breach between himself and Mr. Wesley as irreparable. He could not see how the views which he honestly held in regard to the extent of the atonement could be reconciled with the extreme Arminianism of the Wesleys, and could therefore anticipate nothing less than permanent alienation. It is to be regretted that these two men of God should have suffered even this temporary estrangement, and that it should have affected for a time the Methodist societies in England and Wales. It is an instance of human infirmity, that is all.

But the Paul and Barnabas of early Methodism were not long to remain "parted asunder." Harmonizers were at work to restore that brotherly feeling which had once been so strong a tie between them. Prominent among these was the gentle and gracious Countess of Huntingdon. A reconciliation was finally effected—Whitefield and Wesley began to exchange pulpits despite their differences of faith, "and all things fell out for the furtherance of the gospel." And while each retained his opinions to the last, still they seemed to have agreed never again to disagree. That this unity was complete, that the mantle of Christian brotherhood from that time forth wrapped them warmly in its folds, was eloquently evidenced in that Whitefield when dying left to his "dear and honored friends and disinterested fellow-laborers," the Revs. John and Charles Wesley, a mourning-ring in token of an "indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection." An equally eloquent fact is that while the trustees of the

Tabernacle were arranging for Whitefield's funeral, the chief executor came forward and stated that he had many times said to Whitefield: "If you should die abroad, whom shall we get to preach your funeral sermon? Must it be your old friend, the Rev. John Wesley?" And his invariable answer was, "He is the man." Assuredly, of all others he *was* the man!

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love:
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

* * *

WESLEY PREACHING FROM HIS FATHER'S TOMB.

IN June of the year 1742 John Wesley made a visit to his old home at Epworth. How many sad changes had taken place since he last saw it! His father and mother were both dead and the family widely scattered. But there were other things to add to his sorrow and dejection. He felt that he could not ask any of his former friends to shelter him, since he was now an outcast from his Church and a persecuted itinerant of the new faith he had so fearlessly adopted: He therefore went to a public inn; but here he was recognized by an old family servant, when a most affecting scene took place.

Wesley had come to preach to his old friends and neighbors, with many of whom he had played in childhood. For some time past he had strongly felt this call, and he longed to sow at least a few seeds of the faith in the home of his youth. He had little

hope that the curate would grant his petition to be allowed the use of the church. He had grown so used to rebuffs and refusals that he almost knew the request would be denied; still he bravely determined to press it. It was as he expected—he was curtly denied by the curate, Mr. Romley. Even his humble request to be merely allowed to assist at the services was met with the same rude rejection. But the bold and zealous preacher determined that the people should hear him, if not in the church then without its doors. It was no new thing for him to preach in the open air, as we well know; indeed, by this time he was quite a veteran in field-preaching.

The weather was fine, and the shelter of the trees plentiful. A happy idea struck Wesley: he would preach in the church-yard, and from his father's tomb—from the tomb of him who for nearly forty years had been the loved and honored rector of the very church from which his son had now been so unjustly and shamefully barred. And that my young readers may more fully understand the character of the man who had turned the good and pious John Wesley from the altars of his father, I must tell you that it has come down to us from unquestionable authority that this curate was a "drunken fellow;" and at the very time Mr. Wesley went to him with the request for the church he was in a state of "bestly intoxication." * O what a shame and disgrace it all was! Yet, disregarding the treatment he had received, Wesley attended the church services the next

* Dr. Southey, in his "Life of the Rev. John Wesley."

morning, and in great patience and with the utmost respect sat and heard the prayers read and the sermon delivered by the very man he had seen the evening before so shamefully drunk. Surely his heart was filled with the love of God and with the charity which suffereth long and is kind!

After the sermon in the church, the people on coming out were surprised to hear from a person standing in the church-yard that the Rev. John Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, would hold services in the church-yard that evening at six o'clock. That this announcement was gladly received by the majority of the congregation was amply shown when Mr. Wesley came at the time appointed and found such an assembly as he modestly declared he did not believe Epworth had ever seen before. Standing near the east end of the church upon his father's tomb, his first words to the listening multitude startled them as a trumpet-blast: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost!"

The next evening he stood again upon the same spot and cried aloud to a congregation described as most "earnestly attentive," "By grace ye are saved through faith!" Then followed a forcible and sweeping sermon upon the free agency of man, his privilege to accept or reject the pardon of his sins, and God's willingness to forgive *all* who come unto him truly penitent and believing. Many who heard him were astounded. This came so directly in conflict with the long-established doctrine of "divine grace,"

and of the elect few saved through that grace—it hit so hard a blow at the old form of *mouth-praise* devoid of any real *heart-worship*—that it is no wonder the hearers were amazed.

On Friday evening, again standing upon his father's tomb, Mr. Wesley preached on Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones—a subject that had a peculiarly terrifying import in connection with the surroundings amidst which it was preached. The effect was electrical. As with one voice the people began to cry out for mercy and to prostrate themselves upon the ground. Afterward, as in his most persuasive tones he began to entreat them to flee from the wrath to come and accept a present Saviour, “on every side, as with one accord,” the people lifted up their voices and wept. It was in truth a most pathetic and heart-touching scene.

The following Saturday evening, once more standing above the sacred dust of his father, he preached a sermon on “the righteousness of the law and that of faith.” Such was the effect of this sermon that when he had been speaking but a few minutes several persons dropped to the ground as if dead, while sinners groaned in the agony of their souls so as almost to drown his voice. He stopped his sermon and began fervently to pray for them. Many felt the burden roll away, and sprung up rejoicing in a precious Saviour so newly found.

As he moved among the penitents, exhorting and praying, Mr. Wesley chanced to notice a man whom he recalled as having been previously pointed out to

him as one who professed to be "of no religion at all." Indeed, he seemed to take especial delight in boasting that he had not attended public worship of any kind for upward of thirty years. When Wesley's eye fell upon him he was standing motionless as a statue. He approached him and asked: "Sir, are you a sinner?" At once, and in a voice broken by emotion, he replied, "Sinner enough;" but, singular to relate, this emotion did not in the least extend to his face, which remained as stony as ever, while he continued staring upward as one transfixed. He stood thus until a few moments later, when his wife and servants, who were themselves all bathed in tears, came to put him into his carriage and take him home. But this was not to be the last heard of the religious conviction of one who had honestly confessed himself "sinner enough." The seed had, as Mr. Wesley hoped, fallen upon rich ground, and were to bear their fruit a hundred-fold. Ten years later Mr. Wesley again met this man whose strange state in the Epworth church-yard had made so deep and lasting an impression upon him, and was rejoiced to find him still "strong in faith, though weak in body." For many years he had been "rejoicing in God" without a doubt or a fear to cloud the happiness of his soul, and he was now serenely awaiting the welcome hour when he should depart and be with Christ.

But this was not the only reward of Mr. Wesley's labors in the Epworth church-yard. Wide-spread and most gracious were the results of that week of

preaching, and many the converts won to the new doctrine of "free grace" and "salvation through faith."

What a broad and precious belief it was! How gladly now might the poor sinner cry from the depths of his penitent heart:

Let the world their virtue boast,
Their works of righteousness;
I, a wretch undone and lost,
Am freely saved by grace!

* * *

THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE AND THE METHODISTS.

WHILE John Wesley was preaching at Epworth the news reached him that in a neighboring town "a whole wagon-load of poor Methodists" had been taken up and carried before a justice of the peace on some flimsily invented pretext. Thinking that by his presence he might do his poor persecuted brethren some good, Wesley determined to ride over to the town. Accordingly, securing a horse, he set out on the Wednesday following the Sunday he had first preached in the Epworth church-yard. On reaching the room where the courts were held, he found the Methodists already undergoing their trial. The justice—who was rather a consequential-looking personage, but with a round, good-humored face quite out of keeping with the stern requirements of his office—was just asking what they had done. At first no one had any thing to say, but finally a voice was heard asserting: "Why, they pretend to be better

than any other people; and besides, they pray from morning till night." "But," said the justice, "have they done nothing else?" Then suddenly spoke up an old man, pushing his way nearer the seat of justice: "Yes, sir, an't please your worship, they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them she had such a tongue, and now she is as quiet as a lamb!" "Ha, ha, ha! and is that true?" questioned the justice, throwing himself back in the chair and laughing uproariously. "Well then, my verdict is, carry them back, carry them back, I say, and let them convert all the scolds in town!"

* * *

THE PREACHING STONE-MASON.

UNDER the first sermon Wesley preached at Moorfields Common, as has been stated, John Nelson, a Yorkshire mason, had been powerfully converted. Previous to that hour when the calm, searching eyes of Wesley, fastening themselves as though purposely upon the mason's face, made his heart beat as "the pendulum of a clock," John Nelson had been in a most deplorable state. Everywhere he had sought relief from the fever that burned at his heart. He tells us that God had followed him with conviction ever since his tenth year. Although he had tried to lead an upright, moral life, still he knew this was far from being all a man had to do to win acceptance with God. Since arriving at man's estate he had diligently sought in every direction for that "bread of life" which alone could fill the hungry soul. He

went from church to church seeking help and asking questions until both priests and people thought him crazy. No one seemed to know just what was the remedy he sought. If the priests knew—and it is likely they did—they refrained from telling him, lest the acknowledgment should prove too great a reproach to their own loose and careless lives.

At Moorfields Common he had heard Whitefield, and passed days thereafter in the most signal torture, sleeping little at night, and then only to fall into terrible dreams from which he awoke “dripping with sweat and shivering with terror.” Then Wesley came to Moorfields. From the moment he ascended the platform, stroked back his hair, and fixed his piercing eyes, seemingly through intent, upon the mason’s face, Nelson felt that here indeed was a man who could draw the very secrets from his breast. Trembling like a leaf and dripping with cold perspiration, Nelson nevertheless stood his ground firmly through a discourse “every word of which seemed aimed directly at him.” But in the end the reward came: he was shown the remedy for his wretchedness—the remedy he had so long and so vainly sought. And how simple it was after all! By *faith* he was to be saved *through the blood of Christ*—the blood which could wash away the vilest stain.

From the moment that he felt God’s peace flowing as a river through his heart, Nelson resolved that henceforth the greater part of his life should be spent in telling others of this Saviour he had found. This was not a simple resolve, but the full determi-

nation of a man who threw into it all the earnestness of a fervid temperament. John Nelson was one of the men who never did things by halves. He gave himself with all the force of his character to the work he had planned. He fasted; he read the Scriptures, committing whole passages to memory, so as to be able to use them on future occasions; he passed whole hours upon his knees in prayer, and never failed to exhort his friends and fellow-workmen whenever and wherever he could. The more intimate of his acquaintances now grew really distressed concerning him. They thought him ruined, that he was carrying his religious fervor entirely too far, that his business would suffer, and his family starve. They began to deplore the day that ever he had seen Wesley, and predicted that that ranting Methodist would yet be "the ruin of him." "I thank God," returned Nelson, "that ever Wesley was born. I have learned from him that my chief business in this world is to get well out of it."

With such feelings did some of Nelson's friends now come to regard him that they began to fight shy of his company for fear of some evil coming to themselves. The family with whom Nelson had been boarding, dreading the attention that would be drawn to their premises through "so much praying and fuss as he made about religion," now gave him notice to leave. But when he went to pay them the amount he owed them and take his departure, there was that in his face and manner which so forcibly struck them that their hearts failed them as to the justness of their

reason for desiring him to go. They took a second thought. The Spirit strove earnestly with them. "What if John is right, after all, and we wrong?" they asked themselves. Finally, unable to restrain herself, the woman said: "John Nelson, if God has done for you any thing more than for us, show us how we also may find the same mercy." We may well believe that his ears were not deaf to such an appeal. Upon his knees, at the very threshold of the door whence they had sought to turn him out, he feelingly pleaded with God in their behalf. Soon he was leading them to hear Wesley. One of them was made partaker of the same grace which had filled his own heart with such peace and zeal, while he often expressed "the hope of meeting both in heaven."

When Nelson was converted under Wesley's preaching he had been working on one of the royal buildings. One Sabbath, soon after the memorable day at Moorfields, his employer requested him to work, declaring that "the king's business required haste." Nelson firmly replied that he would not work on the Sabbath for any man in England, even if he *were* the king, except to quench fire, or to do something that required as instant help. "Then thou shalt lose thy place," declared his employer angrily. "I would rather starve than offend God," returned Nelson. "What hast thou done that thou makest such an ado about religion?" demanded his employer testily. "I always took thee for an honest man, and could trust thee with five hundred pounds." "So you might," returned Nelson sturdily, "and not have lost one

penny by me." "But I have a worse opinion of you now than ever," re_amed his employer. "Master," quickly returned Nelson, "I have the odds of you there, for I have a much worse opinion of myself than you can have." But he did not lose his place; neither was he again called upon to work on the Sabbath.

Nelson now wrote to his wife and to his kindred in Birstal, telling them of the great change that had come to him, and earnestly urging upon them the importance of seeking this great blessing for themselves. So far did his zeal carry him that he fasted once a day that he might give the price of his dinner to the poor. He even hired one of his fellow-workmen to go and hear Wesley, believing that his money could not be spent upon a better mission. The end proved him right in his judgment, for this deed, as questionable as it may appear in some lights, was the means of bringing both the man and his wife to Christ. Nelson at last went in person to Birstal. Face to face with his family, how much more earnestly he could plead with them than through the cold medium of pen and paper! Among his first converts were an aunt, his two brothers, and two cousins. What an effort these conversions cost him we may judge when it is known that at first they believed him "deluded of the devil," and it was long ere he could make any headway over this prejudice. But God graciously blessed his efforts. The circle began to widen, as that on the bosom of a stream into which a stone has been cast. At length his house would

not hold the people who came to hear him preach. Then he stood in the door and addressed the multitudes without. Conversions of the most remarkable character took place—those of men long hardened in their sins, and of avowed blasphemers. Soon the ale-houses were deserted; the loafers left the streets—they congregated about Nelson's house and listened to his words, many going forth again with renewed life. In short, the drunkards became sober, the Sabbath was kept, and the aspect of the whole place was so changed that no one would have recognized it for the old Birstal.

Hearing of Nelson's work, Wesley came to help him. Great was his surprise to find not only a preacher but a society awaiting him! In regard to the great change that had taken place in town and people Wesley pronounced it one of the most remarkable that he had ever seen. "Such a change," he concluded, "did God work by the artless testimony of one man!" But this was not all. His voice, sounding at first as that which crieth in a wilderness, but little heeded, now went forth into Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax, and all Yorkshire. Of Methodism in Yorkshire he was undoubtedly the founder, and to this day all that region bears the glowing imprint of his faith and zeal.

Nelson now labored at his trade of hewing stone by day, and at night he went out to preach. Other places besides Yorkshire were visited and blessed by his efforts. But now the country was thrown into great commotion through threatened invasions from

France and Spain. **The** Scotch Pretender, too, had recently made several movements that excited alarm. All sorts of vile slanders against the Methodists were put in circulation. They were traitors; their leader had even been seen in company with the Pretender in France. Again, he was an agent of Spain, and received large remittances from that country for valuable information which he in secret furnished the heads of the government. Following upon the circulation of these slanders came persecutions of the direst sort. Often these outrages, with more shame be it said, were effected through those wearing the uniform of the king's soldiers.

At Nottingham, where John Nelson went to preach, a sergeant of the army said to him with tears flowing down his cheeks: "Sir, in the presence of God and all this people, I beg your pardon; for I came on purpose to mob you, but when I could get no one to assist me I stood to hear you, and am convinced of the deplorable state of my soul; I believe you are a servant of the living God." These words spoken, he kissed Nelson upon the cheek, and went away weeping as one in whom there was no hope.

At Grimsby, the parish clergyman, a low and drunken fellow, to whose debauched way of living Nelson's pure and honest life was a perpetual reproach, hired a drummer and fifer to drown the words of his preaching. To two or three rowdies he also supplied liquor, with the understanding that they were to raise a mob to set upon the house where Nelson lodged and entirely destroy it. Before Nelson's sermon was half

over the drummer was so powerfully convicted that he fell upon his knees crying for mercy, while the fifer threw his fife away and fled from the scene. The mob was raised, however, and marched to Nelson's lodging. They found him preaching to a small congregation that had gathered within. Although their clerical leader was present and urging them to pull down the house, the mob would do naught so long as Nelson's voice could be heard in exhortation; but when that ceased they only broke the windows and ran away.

At his own home, Birstal, another clergyman—a man as low and unprincipled as the other—swore out a charge of vagrancy against him and had him arrested, hoping to get him sent into the army. Under the law at that time men who could give no proof of their legitimate business were apprehended and forced to serve in the army. One of Nelson's townsmen offered five hundred pounds to have him released, but it did no good. Notwithstanding his own efforts and those of his friends, he was marched off to Halifax, where this same Birstal vicar sat upon the bench as one of the commission that had the disposal of his case. Many of Nelson's friends and neighbors followed to bear witness to his honest and industrious habits, but the wily vicar so managed that they were not heard. Fixing his eyes fearlessly upon his accuser, Nelson said to him: "I am as able to get my living by my hands as any other man in England, and you know it." After all, he was ordered to jail at Bradford. He said to his weeping friends on part-

ing with them: "Fear not; God hath his way in the whirlwind, and he will plead my cause; only pray for me that my faith fail not."

At Bradford he was placed in a foul dungeon under a slaughter-house. It flowed with blood and filth, and smelt, he tells us, "like a pig-sty; but my soul," he adds, "was so filled with the love of God it was a paradise to me." There was nothing to sit on, and nothing to sleep on save a bed of foul straw; but even at sight of this his spirit did not quail. Impressed by his courageous demeanor, a poor soldier offered to become responsible for him, and another, a bitter opposer of Methodism, proposed to get security for him, just so he might be allowed to sleep in a bed. The people handed him food and water and candles through a hole in the door, and stood without singing hymns with him until morning. Their charities Nelson generously shared with a miserable fellow-prisoner, who would otherwise have starved.

In the morning his wife came. Her first words showed how worthy she was of him: "Fear not," she said, speaking to him through the hole in the door, "the cause is God's for which you are here, and he will plead it himself. He that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of me and the children. He will give you strength; he will perfect what is lacking in us and bring you to his rest." Her brave husband blessed her for these words, and added: "I cannot fear; nay, I cannot fear either man or devil so long as I find the love of God as I now do."

The next day he was carried to Leeds. He says he thought of the "Pilgrim's Progress," for as soon as he was in jail hundreds of people crowded the streets and gazed at him through the iron gate. Many were on the point of fighting for him, even some of those who opposed the Methodists. A stranger in the place offered to bail him out, but was refused. That night a hundred persons met with him in the jail, and joined with him in worship.

A few days afterward he was marched off to York. Here so great was the hostility against the Methodists that at sight of him it was as though "hell from beneath had been moved to meet him." The streets and windows were filled with people who shouted at him and made threatening gestures as though he had been the vilest traitor in the kingdom. "But," he tells us, "the Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look upon them as grasshoppers, and pass through the city as though there had been none in it save God and me."

He was again thrown into prison. He passed his time in reproving the officers who swore, and in exhorting all to a change of life. He was soon ordered to uniform himself and appear with the soldiers on parade. To the corporal who was sent to gird him in his military trappings he talked in such a way that the man shook as though he had the palsy. When the musket was handed him, he declared that he would bear arms "as a cross, but that he would not fight; that it was against his conscience, and that he would not harm his conscience for any man on

earth." He continually reproved and exhorted his companions in the ranks. Soon he had quite a company about him desiring to hear him talk. He preached regular sermons to them. In the end they went away declaring: "This is the doctrine that ought to be preached, let men say what they will against it." Before long, in his uniform of the king's army, he was preaching regularly in the quarters of the regiment, on the streets, in the fields, and in various public places; nor could any proceeding on the part of his officers stop him.

Once a "stripling ensign," who took pleasure in tormenting him, had him committed to prison for preaching. For the first time since his conversion the old carnal nature rose up fiercely within John Nelson. "It caused a sore temptation to arise in me," he confesses, "to think that a wicked, ignorant man should torment me, and I able to tie his head and heels together. I found an old man's bone in me; but the Lord lifted up a standard, when anger was coming on like a flood, else I should have wrung his neck to the ground and set my foot upon him."

At length, after marching about with his regiment for three months, and suffering all kinds of indignities, Nelson was released through the influence of the Countess of Huntingdon. He left this soldier's life, so repugnant to his peaceful nature, to go forth willingly, joyously in the service of a greater King.

CHARLES WESLEY AND THE RIOTERS.

LIKE his brother John and Whitefield, Charles Wesley was often called to give the "test of his heroic temper." Sensitive in body, dreamy in temperament, and with the soul of a poet, he nevertheless possessed the heart of a hero. His lofty sense of duty and his unremitting devotion to his Master's cause were preëminent over all other sentiments. In the midst of peril he stood invincible, his poet soul unshaken, his vivid imagination bursting into the flame of glorious, heroic emotion. Such occasions gave him all the more inspiration for his grand and glowing hymns. Coming from Walsall to Sheffield, where "hell from beneath was moved to oppose him," he might well have sung with Winkler:

Yea, let men rage, since thou wilt spread
Thy shad'wing wings around my head:
Since in all pain thy tender love
Will still my sure refreshment prove.

Many times the poet-preacher stood in imminent peril of his life. Almost from the time of his starting out to preach mobs had assailed him with flying missiles of every description, or "with tongues set on fire of hell," as they had Whitefield and his brother John. He was frequently hooted at and hissed by the miserable rabble, each bent upon drowning his voice. He was covered with mud, and had his clothes torn nearly from him; he was often bruised, and sometimes beaten; the windows of the houses in which he lodged were broken by the mob on the outside. But amidst it all he remained unshaken; and

giving renewed thanks to God for each deliverance, he moved steadily and heroically on.

At Walsall a military officer led the mob against him, sword in hand and breathing out curses at every step. A shower of stones began, hitting the desk behind which he stood and injuring many in the audience. Fearing for the people more than he did for himself, and not wishing to see the innocent hurt, Charles Wesley now determined to go out and stand face to face with the assaulting foe. He courageously made his way until he stood directly in front of the furious officer with the "whole army of aliens at his back." Fixing his eyes piercingly upon him, and addressing him a few words, he handed him one of his brother John's tracts, headed "Advice to a Soldier." The officer cursed and raved, and threw the tract at his feet. Some one else stooped to pick it up. Wesley stood immovable for a few moments, then forced his way back toward the door of the building. Here, while the stones continued to fly, many of them hitting him in the face, he prayed for the king, and resumed the sermon he had begun in the house. The sermon finished, he besought God for sinners, whom he designated as "servants of the devil." This seemed to arouse the officer to renewed fury. He sprung forward, passed through the crowd, and placing the point of his sword at Wesley's breast swore that he should die for what he termed ridicule of the king and insults to his officers. Wesley calmly fixed his eyes upon him, and opening the folds of his vest, the better to receive the blow, quietly said: "Strike,

if you desire. I fear God and honor the king." Before this sublime courage the wanton heart of the officer quailed. He returned his sword to its scabbard, and slunk away through the crowd. But the worst was not yet over. As Charles retired to the house of a friend, the mob, greatly increased in numbers, began to attack it. All the mobs he had ever seen, he declared, "were as lambs to these." Windows were smashed in, doors broken down, and streams of water and showers of stones thrown in upon the helpless inmates.

Afterward, when the preacher and his little flock had again repaired to the "preaching-house," the mob fell upon the building, determined to pull it down. They succeeded in breaking off one of the doors and in demolishing a corner of the structure. During this proceeding the worshipers within remained at their devotions, "praying and praising God." All night the rioters continued to rage like wild beasts through the town; but in the midst of it all Charles "calmly slept," his trust firmly staid upon the gracious care of his heavenly Father.

At five o'clock the next morning he was preaching in the damaged chapel. After he left it the mob again besieged it, and this time left not "one stone upon another." Seeking a different lodging-place from that of the night before, he hoped to secure at least a few hours of freedom from the harrowing scenes of the preceding day. But it was not to be. The mob soon found out where he was lodged, and set upon the place with a fury that would have

shamed "all the devils of hell." The house was gutted, and streams of water poured in upon it, not a door or window being left. Wesley afterward entered the dismantled room and lay down to rest, when in five minutes he was peacefully asleep. The last words of his petition that night were, "Father, scatter thou the people that delight in war." The next morning at five o'clock he was up and in the midst of his brethren, comforting them, and speaking words of reassurance and faith. Leaving them with the promise to return to share their woes, endure their trials, and break again to them the bread of life, he went forth to encounter trials, toil, and danger.

Wesley afterward learned that this mob had been stirred up by the clergy of Sheffield, who so denounced the Methodists, even from the pulpits, as to make the people believe that "whosoever killed them were doing God service." Shame, shame on them! and they wearing the holy vestments of a Church that professed to follow Christ and keep his commandments.

Soon after leaving Sheffield, Charles went into Cornwall, at that time one of the roughest mining districts of all England. But as uncongenial as was the soil, the seeds of Methodism had already been planted. The divinely enjoined command of the great leader, that his preachers should "go not only to those who need them, but to those who needed them *most*," had planted the standard of the faith even in Cornwall, where it often seemed as if it must go down before the storms of persecution or be torn

to shreds in the fierce gales of opposition. But the brave soldiers of the cross never faltered as they repeatedly went to the charge.

At St. Ives, in Cornwall, while Charles Wesley was preaching in the chapel a frenzied mob assailed it. They broke out the windows, wrenched off the doors, tore up the seats, and left nothing standing but the stone walls. Wesley stood calmly looking on while his affrighted congregation gathered about him. Their work of destruction finished, the mob next turned upon the preacher with vile epithets, curses, and threats. They swore that he should never preach in that house again, declaring that if he did they would kill him on the spot. Unawed, however, he lifted up his voice and began to preach Christ and his death for sinners. The mob became wild with rage; they stormed and swore more fiercely than ever. They brandished their clubs about his head, yet, strange to say, none of them struck him, though many were aimed directly at him. The congregation did not fare so well. Indeed, some of them were most terribly beaten, one or two even unto death. Women and children were thrown down and roughly trampled upon; but their courage never forsook them—even in the midst of their suffering scarce a cry or groan escaped them. Truly, the strength of the Lord dwelt with them.

While the riot was raging wildly, as had happened on the like occasions before, the mob fell out among themselves, and began to beat each other, swearing horribly. Many were crippled and otherwise seri-

ously hurt. Finally, after breaking a number of heads, among them that of their leader, who was the town-clerk, they left Wesley and his devoted people in full possession of the field.

At Poole, another town in the district, Wesley and his congregation were entirely driven from the church, through the streets, and to the edge of the town, where they were kept several hours surrounded by the hooting mob, who spent the time in alternately cursing them and throwing stones. On this occasion a shameful record is left, a record that stands upon the pages of the register of one of the parish churches—sufficient, it would seem, to have long ago blistered the page upon which it is written. A church-warden led this mob—a man who, it is said, stood well in his church. Getting preacher and people to the outskirts of the town, he left his associates to torment them in every way their evil hearts could devise, and returned to the town ale-house to procure drinks for those who had helped him “drive the Methodists.” Never were wages of sin more shamefully earned, or paid in purer coin of Satan! And there on the parish book of that zealous warden’s church stands to this day the shameful record: *“Expenses at Ann Gartrell’s for driving the Methodists, nine shillings!”* Is it any wonder that the people were wicked, when the very churches not only sanctioned but abetted the wickedness?

As at Sheffield, it was soon proved beyond a doubt that this mob had been instigated and aided by the clergy, who were everywhere doing all they could to

crush out a sect whose simple and devout style of living was so palpable a reproach to their own loose and dissolute ways.

Despite all the persecutions with which he met, Charles Wesley continued to preach throughout the mining region of Cornwall until August, 1743, and with gracious results. He knew that at every step of the way there were toils, trials, perils, and even death; but all around him the people were perishing in their sins, and with a hero's heart and a martyr's faith he determined to know neither rest nor languor until he had borne to them the glad proclamation of life eternal. It was of just such scenes as these that he wrote:

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
Into thy blessèd hands receive;
And let me live to preach thy word,
And let me to thy glory live;
My every sacred moment spend
In publishing the sinners' Friend.

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine!
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like thine,
And lead them to thy open side,
The sheep for whom their Shepherd died.

* * *

"ONE WHOLE SIDE LEFT."

Soon after Charles Wesley had been in Cornwall, John Wesley, in company with brave John Nelson, came into the district to see what could be done toward storming it for Christ. They remained for



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three weeks' hard service, and during all that time slept upon the floor. Wesley had his great-coat for a pillow, and faithful John rested his head upon a copy of Burkitt's "Notes on the New Testament." It was hard fare, but they were soldiers enough to endure it.

About three o'clock one morning Wesley, cramped and sore with long lying on the hard boards, stretched himself to turn over. Finding Nelson also awake, he clapped him upon the side, saying with a voice as hearty as though they had been in the most luxurious bed: "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side!"

But this rough mode of sleeping was not the only hardship. They were often consumed by the pangs of hunger, for seldom were they asked to eat and drink.

Once, as they were returning from preaching at St. Hilary Downs, Mr. Wesley, overcome with hunger, stopped to pick some blackberries. As he conveyed the first handful to his mouth, he said to Nelson with quaint humor: "Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries, for this is the worst country I ever saw for getting a stomach."

What cheerfulness in the midst of sore deprivation! Assuredly this was the man of all others to lead those "peculiar people" whose fiery trials gave them the fortitude to win and the worthiness to wear the crown of martyrdom.

WESLEY AND THE WEDNESBURY MOBS.

BESIDES preaching a great many times in London and Bristol during the year 1743, John Wesley visited several other places and preached as often as he could gather a congregation. While at Bristol on one of these occasions the news reached him that many of the Methodists at Wednesbury, Darlaston, and West Bromwich, in Staffordshire, had been assailed by mobs who not only struck them down while out on the streets, and pelted them with stones and mud, but also broke into their houses, smashing their furniture and cruelly beating the helpless women and children. Mr. Wesley, with his usual courage and loyalty, made all haste to go to the aid of his persecuted people, determined to do what he could to comfort and advise them, and if need be to suffer with them. After reaching Wednesbury and seeing the state of affairs, he made up his mind to face the howling mobs and declare unto them the divine message of love, peace, and good-will to all men. If ever a soil *needed* the seed of the word, it was this passion-torn, Satan-stirred soil of Wednesbury. Accordingly, at noon of the day following his arrival he preached from the horse-block in what was known as the Bull-ring. The crowd surged about him, many uttering threats as to what they would do if he did not desist; but beyond throwing a few stones, sticks, and eggs, no other demonstrations were made.

On the same afternoon, however, as he was sitting in the house of one Francis Ward, writing, the mob laid siege to the house. Falling upon his knees, Wesley

besought God to send the mob away. In half an hour not a man remained. God seemed to have his faithful servant in the very hollow of his hand. After the mob had dispersed, Wesley urged his friends to allow him to depart, fearing that further danger might beset them if they continued to shelter him. They would not listen to his proposition, but entreated him the more to remain.

By five o'clock the mob was back again, and in greater numbers than ever. High above all the other turbulent noises resounded the cries, "Bring out the minister!" "Bring him out, we say!" "We *will* have the minister!" Fearing the consequences to his friends if he remained inactive, Mr. Wesley now attempted to leave the house in order to face the mob and reason with them. But he was at once prevented. Failing in this endeavor, he next instructed one of those with him to go out and take the leader of the mob by the hand and bring him into the house. The man went as requested, and soon returned leading the captain who was cursing horribly and raging like a lion. In a little while after Wesley had spoken a few words to him he became as quiet as a lamb. He then asked Wesley to let him go out and bring in two or three of his most violently enraged companions. Permission was immediately given. When these companions first appeared with him they were "fit to eat the ground with rage," but after being a few moments in Wesley's presence they became as calm as their leader. This reads like a page out of some highly colored romance, but the broad stamp of truth

has been given to it, and to many similar incidents in his early ministry.

Mr. Wesley now disregarded the entreaties of his friends and decided that he would go out among the mob. As soon as he had made his way into the midst of them he stood upon a chair that some one brought him, and, looking out over the sea of angry faces, asked calmly, "What do you want with me?" Some instantly replied, "To knock you on the head!" But the larger number said, "We want you to go with us to the justice." Then answered Wesley as calmly as before, "I will go with you with all my heart," and got down off his chair. But mounting it again in a few moments, he spoke kind words to them, and began to petition God in their behalf. Many were so struck with his manner and his words as to cry out lustily, "The gentleman is an honest gentleman; we will spill our blood for him!" Wesley again asked quietly: "Since you desire me to go to the justice, shall we go to-night or to-morrow morning?" "To-night! to-night!" cried out those who had not yet been touched by his bearing as some others had.

They now pushed him on in front of them and set out for Bentley Hall, two miles away, where Mr. Lane, the justice, resided. They had not gone half the distance when night settled down darkly, and a heavy rain came on, wetting Mr. Wesley to the skin and chilling him through and through.

One or two of the mob ran on ahead to tell the justice they had brought Mr. Wesley to be tried before his worship. They thought it would be quite a

fine feather in their cap to have captured and delivered up to the stern prosecution of the law the leader of the detested Methodists. But Mr. Lane was a sensible man; let us hope that he was also a just man, and that his action on this occasion was prompted alone by right motives. At any rate, it seemed that he could see no good that would come of a prosecution of this kind; so when the men asked him to receive Mr. Wesley for trial, he called out rather sternly, "What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Carry him back whence you brought him." Almost dumfounded by this answer, they retreated from the door; but the rest of the mob came up and began pounding upon the door and calling out threateningly to the justice to open it. A servant came with a warning message from the justice, but they still continued to pound and cry out for the door to be opened. His son next came, and in a stern voice inquired who they were and what they wanted. "What have the Methodists done," he asked, "that you should thus apprehend their leader?" "Why, an't please your worship," answered one of the men, "they sing psalms all day, and make folks rise at five in the morning; and what would your worship advise us to do?" "Why, to go home and be quiet," returned the justice's son, who like his father was a peaceful man.

Some of the mob felt inclined to take this advice, but the majority still demanded that he should be tried before a justice. It was finally decided that they should push on to Walsall and bring him up

before Justice Persehouse; so off they went again, dragging the helpless Wesley with them.

At about seven o'clock they reached Walsall. On arriving at the house and applying for admittance, the justice sent word that he was in bed and would not be disturbed. Again their wicked designs were thwarted. While they were deliberating what to do, and the cooler-headed of them were advising a return to Wednesbury and the release of Mr. Wesley, another mob that had been formed at Walsall came rushing down upon them, knocking them right and left and trampling on them as they fell.

In the confusion that ensued Mr. Wesley was left in the hands of the Walsall mob. He was entirely unhurt, and tried to speak to the crowd, but they yelled and hooted so that his voice was completely drowned. They were indeed like fiends possessed. Some of the Wednesbury mob now came back and united with them, while many women also ran up and joined the rabble. In a short while, evidently having arrived at some decision, they set off toward the neighboring town of Darlaston, pulling Mr. Wesley along with them. As they were entering the town Mr. Wesley chanced to catch sight of the wide-open door of a large house near at hand. He attempted to break away from the crowd and enter it, but a man caught him roughly by the hair and jerked him back. They now seized him and carried him from one end of the town to the other through the main street, hooting and yelling like so many demons. But, strange to say, he was not in the least hurt; neither

did he feel any pain, as he himself tells us, nor even weariness. Underneath were the Everlasting Arms, while over all God kept watch.

As they came to the open door of a shop in the western end of the town Wesley tried again to escape by passing through it; but seeing his intention, the owner at once barred his way, declaring he dared not let him in, for if he did the mob would at once pull his house down. None the more dismayed, Wesley turned around upon the sill of the door, so as to face the mob, and in a voice that immediately commanded their attention asked them if they would not hear him speak. "No! no!" a chorus of voices cried; then again, "Knock his brains out!" "Down him!" "Kill him at once!" But others said, "Nay, but we will hear him!" Silence at length obtained, he began by asking them what harm he had done them. "Which of you have I wronged by word or deed?" he asked, then continued talking to them for a quarter of an hour, until his voice failed from the great strain put upon it. When this happened he seemed to lose control of the mob again, for they began roaring out more threateningly than ever, "Bring him away; bring him away, and let's put an end to him!" As they surged toward him his voice and strength seemed to return as by a miracle. He fell upon his knees and cried aloud to God in prayer. Then a most wonderful thing happened. The man who led the mob sprung to his side and said in broken tones: "Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head." Two

or three others now joined him, and all making the same protestations; but the majority of the mob still cried out, "Knock him on the head!" "Kill him!" Then up spoke the man in whose door he stood—the very man who only a few moments before had barred his way: "For shame! for shame! let him go!" A stalwart and honest butcher, coming up at this time, also added his voice to that of the shop-keeper, declaring that it was a shame to treat Wesley so. This worthy butcher showed his interest by deeds as well as words, for, baring his powerful arm, he at once began to thrust in among the mob, driving back several of those who were pressing Wesley against the wall. Under these sturdy and powerful blows the mob soon fell back, when the three or four men who had first crowded around Wesley with words of penitence and offers of assistance took him and led him away.

But the temper of the majority was not yet broken, although some of their heads had nearly come under the butcher's telling blows. There was a bridge not far away, and when Mr. Wesley and his body-guard reached it, and were on the point of passing over, the mob again set upon them and came near doing them serious hurt; but they managed to escape by hastening round to where there was a mill-dam and across it to a meadow beyond, where the darkness soon concealed them from their enemies.

It was ten o'clock at night when Wednesbury was at last reached. Here Mr. Wesley found his friends in a great state of alarm on his account. They were

engaged in fervent prayer for his safety at the time of his entrance. He joined with a swelling and grateful heart in thanksgiving to God for his wonderful deliverance. In all the recent conflict he had lost "only one flap of his waistcoat and a little skin from one of his hands." "From first to last," he says, "I was as calm as if I had been in my study."

Verily this was no ordinary man. He knew not what fear was. Not a tremor shook his frame, even at the most perilous moment. He felt that God was ever near, and in this consciousness was calm and peaceful and strong. Not once, he says, did he fall or even make a stumble. Had he fallen he might not have been able to get up again, but would have been crushed to death. From first to last the "All-sustaining Arms" were about him. Many times a stout, repulsive-looking man tried to strike him over the head with a stick, but something always intervened—Wesley was either pushed forward by the surging crowd just in time to be out of reach of the blow, or else the man was pushed backward. Another man rushed up and moved his club to strike, but just as he had it raised above his head he suddenly dropped it and began instead to stroke Wesley's hair, remarking as he did so, to some one behind him, "What soft hair he has!"

Another remarkable thing was that the very men who at first were the bitterest against him the soonest became his friends. One of the women who had been with the mob at Walsall, and one of the most

violent and outspoken in her denunciations, came to him at Darlaston, and, seeking to shield him with her body, declared that no one should touch him. She was at once knocked down, and would doubtless have been killed had not one of the men cried quickly, "Hold, Tom; it is honest Murchin!" His escape all the way through forms one of the most marvelous on record.

The morning after these thrilling experiences Wesley mounted his horse and rode through the streets of Wednesbury on his way to Nottingham. His friends begged to be allowed to accompany him, at least through the town, but he firmly refused. He said that he desired especially to make the trip alone. No one accosted him. All was quiet. At no point was there any sign of the howling mob who the day before had made such a pandemonium of the streets—instead, several quiet-looking people civilly spoke to him. In more than one of them he felt assured that he recognized those who had been with the mob the evening before.

At Nottingham John Wesley met his brother Charles, and thus speaks of the occasion: "My brother came, delivered out of the mouths of the lions. His clothes were torn to tatters; he looked like a soldier of Christ. The mob of Wednesbury, Darlaston, and Walsall carried him about for several hours with a full intent to murder him; but his work was not done, or he had now been with the 'souls under the altar.'"

Verily his work was *not* done!

THE FIRST MARTYR TO METHODISM.

WITHIN a short time after Nelson had been seized and impressed into the army, another brave proclaimer of the Methodist faith was forced to pass through the like indignities. This was Thomas Beard, a peaceable, industrious man, who had been torn from his trade, his wife, and his children, and sent away to become a soldier, for no other reason than that he had "called sinners to repentance."

Beard had been a fellow-prisoner with Nelson, and afterward served with him in the same regiment. But he had a less happy fate, for before friends could interfere for his release he was taken sick and sent to the hospital at Newcastle. His was a brave spirit, and under all the wrongs heaped upon him he bore himself as a true soldier of the cross. When lying on his hard cot at the hospital, sick and suffering, he still continued to praise God unceasingly. High fevers came on and he was bled, but either through the ignorance or the willful neglect of the surgeon the arm was allowed to fester. A few days later it mortified, had to be amputated, and caused his death. He was a man much loved by all who knew him, and his untimely taking off was greatly deplored, especially by his fellow-laborers in the Methodist ranks. Nelson wept for him as for a brother, and John Wesley writing of him in his Journal closes with the lines:

Servant of God, well done! well hast thou fought
The better fight; who singly hath maintained
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of God, in word mightier than they in arms.

There is no doubt that Thomas Beard was sacrificed through the implacable hate of the enemies of his faith. It was of the death of this brave and pious soldier, the first martyr to Methodism, that Charles Wesley wrote two of his most feeling hymns, from one of which these verses are taken:

Soldier of Christ, adieu!
Thy conflicts here are past,
Thy Lord hath brought thee through,
And given the crown at last:
Rejoice to wear the glorious prize,
Rejoice with God in paradise.

There all thy sufferings cease,
There all thy griefs are o'er:
The prisoner is at peace,
The mourner weeps no more:
From man's oppressive tyranny
Thou liv'st, thou liv'st forever free!



HOW METHODISM SWEPT THE UPPER RANKS.

WE have seen how Methodism up to this time, although it had become such a help and blessing to the poor, had made but little headway among the rich and great. But it was now to speed its way like the electric bolt of heaven through the hardened social crust of England's upper circles. And she who was to become the gracious means through which this result should be obtained was Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, the daughter of an earl and the wife of another. How serenely does her beautiful and benign figure stand forth from the foreground of early Meth-

odism! Truly has it been said of her that "she had her place and her work from God." With a "strain of royal blood in her veins," beautiful, wealthy, courted, with her companions from earliest years princes, dukes, and others of noble lineage, her proudest boast, nevertheless, was that she was "an humble follower of the Lord Jesus Christ."

One day among those who stood listening to a sermon by one of John Wesley's preachers was the noble Lady Margaret Hastings, a sister-in-law of the Countess of Huntingdon. The plain, forcible words sent conviction to her heart, and from that moment she knew neither rest nor peace until she too had found the blessing of which the preacher spoke. Shortly after this, going on a visit to her sister-in-law, almost her first words after those of greeting were to tell the Countess of John Wesley and of his itinerant preachers who were going about preaching to rich and poor alike, in the parks, in the commons, by the road-side, at the fashionable watering-places, anywhere and everywhere that they could gain an audience. "O!" declared the Lady Margaret at the close, "since I have heard them and known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, I have been as happy as an angel!" The remark, "happy as an angel," struck the Countess with peculiar force. *What* was it to be as happy as an angel? O that she too might experience the feeling! Surely it was this happiness she had been seeking ever since the time, when only nine years old, she had seen the body of a little village maiden, just the same age as herself,

borne to the grave amidst a concourse of weeping friends, and realized that she too might die, even as young as she was; but with all her efforts, her earnest, constant striving, she had not yet found it. And *why* had she not? Surely she had tried with all her mind and strength. Ah, she had yet to realize that it takes something more than the mind and strength, something infinitely more. What was it her sister had said about this salvation being *given* by the Lord Jesus Christ? Was it then after all a *gift*, and not bought through "many good works," but a "*free gift*," one bestowed "without money and without price," through the simple faith and trust in Him who died for all? At last the burden rolled from her troubled heart, the scales fell from her eyes, the radiant light of God's love and power came pouring upon her soul in such glorious floods that like Lady Margaret she too could say, "I am as happy as an angel!" She was very well aware of the opposition and ridicule with which her "newborn faith" would meet among her haughty and aristocratic acquaintances. It required a truly heroic soul to stem the tide that would now set against her, the sport that would be made of her for having gone over to the fanatical doctrine of the "ranting Methodists." But she was equal to the requirement. She had the courage of the noble blood that flowed in her veins; she saw her duty clearly, and resolved to live faithfully up to her convictions. One of her first steps was to send for the Revs. John and Charles Wesley, tell them of her happy experience, and invite them to preach in her



THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

house. She told them also that from that time forth it was her unalterable determination to help them in every way she could to spread the doctrine of the new faith to the uttermost ends of the kingdom. Nobly did she fulfill the promise!

It soon became known throughout the aristocratic circle in which she moved that the Lady Selina had become a Methodist. At this there was a great stir, and many scenes, as might be supposed. Some openly and angrily disapproved, others sharply and severely criticised behind her back, and others again laughed at her and told her she was very foolish, while all were loud and emphatic in their denunciation of the prating Methodists. Some even went so far as to try to persuade her husband to *compel* her to renounce the Methodist faith. But although he was not a Christian himself, he was too manly a man, too staunch an upholder of freedom of thought and action to put any restraint upon the liberty of another, especially when that other was the wife he so truly loved and honored. He, however, after much worry, finally consented to send for a bishop to talk with her, and to try and persuade her that she need not be "so strict and zealous." This bishop, whose name was Benson, was the very one who had ordained Whitefield to the ministry. He was quite a learned and consequential man, but with all his learning he found himself no match for the Countess, burning as was her heart with the immortal fire of God's love. The bishop showed bad temper for a bishop, for, finding himself outwitted at every turn, he became

very angry and declared that he was sorry that he had ever ordained Whitefield to go on in the way he was going, preaching sermons to the hurt of the Church, and constantly drawing away its members. "Mark my words!" exclaimed the Countess: "on your dying-bed you will reflect on it with pleasure." She was right. Years after, the bishop, dying, sent to ask Whitefield's prayers, and also to make him a handsome offer of money to carry on his work.

The Lady Selina kept faithfully on her way. Both the Wesleys and Whitefield preached statedly at her home. At first very few of her friends could be induced to come and give them a hearing, but when disarmed of their hostility through the Countess's winning courtesy, they began to attend the meetings—at first from curiosity, but at last from deeper feelings.

Many stirring scenes were enacted in the Countess's drawing-room. To depict them as they were would require a master-hand. The courtly Lord Chesterfield, the Countess's brother—he who was called "the first gentleman of his century"—was at first a coldly critical listener, then, touched deeper than he cared to show, confessed to Whitefield: "Sir, I will not tell you what I shall tell others, how much I approve you."

On one occasion, when Whitefield was preaching in the Countess's house to a large and fashionable audience—among whom there was no more interested hearer than the courtly Chesterfield—he chanced, in illustrating the peril of a sinner, to use the figure of a blind man led by a little dog. As they entered upon a path that led along the edge of a precipice, the dog

was supposed to have suddenly broken the string and darted off in pursuit of some game. The blind man was then pictured as groping his way by means of his staff, and, unaware of his danger, gradually drawing nearer and nearer the edge of the precipice. Reaching the mouth of the gulf, his staff suddenly fell from his hands and dropped into the chasm, which was so deep as to give back no echo of the fall. Thinking that the cane had only fallen to the earth at his feet, the blind man stooped to pick it up, was propelled forward, and meeting no resistance stood for one dread moment poised upon one foot only, and the next went plunging headlong into the yawning depths below! At this point in the preacher's wonderful word-painting the listening Chesterfield was so carried away by the vividness of his descriptive powers that he sprung excitedly from his seat, exclaiming, "He is gone! he is gone!"

So great an interest did this courtly lord take in the preaching of Whitefield and the Wesleys that he had them several times to hold services at his own private chapel at Bretley Hall. Both his wife and sister became earnest converts to the faith. If *he* had but done the same, he would not have had cause to write at the close of his vain and brilliant life: "I have not been as wise as Solomon, but I have been as wicked, and I can truly say, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'"

The cold and unbelieving Hume listened to this Methodist preaching with unfeigned pleasure and surprise. For plain power and clear, searching truth,

where had he heard its equal? Horace Walpole, the gay wit, to hide his deeper feelings, could only seek to mask them under the triflings of his airy badinage. Even the openly avowed infidel, Lord Bolingbroke, could not but admit that there was something in the telling power of this new doctrine that amazed and perplexed him. His brother, Lord Saint John, was wiser; he *inquired* into the cause of his perplexity, saw the way clearly, embraced the faith, and became an earnest Christian. The Countess of Suffolk—she who is described as the reigning beauty of the court of George II.—was thrown into such an agony of conviction under a sermon of Whitefield as to declare that the preaching was aimed at her expressly.

Thus the good work went on—high and low, rich and poor sharing alike in the “gracious visitation,” and each alike placed under serious conviction. And the Lady Selina—what of her during all this time, when so many of her aristocratic acquaintances had fallen as corn before the wind? She had gone on enlarging in zeal, and speaking out for her Master wherever and whenever she could. Many of the noblest women in England owed their spiritual awakening to some arresting word spoken to them at the very moment when they seemed deepest in their follies. Whenever she was in London the Countess would turn her back on all the costly churches where the nobles worshiped, and go to hear the Wesleys at the humble Foundry Church, or Whitefield at his Tabernacle. She was the ardent friend of both, and when differences of opinion in regard to certain

points of doctrine arose between them, at one time threatening to part them forever, she became the gracious harmonizer who kept them, if not brothers in creed, yet friends at heart unto the end.

In the very midst of her noble work the hand of affliction was laid heavily upon the Countess, but it seemed only to draw her nearer to the One who chastened. She lost her children, then her husband, and all within a short while of each other. Instead of wrapping herself in "the black weeds of widowhood," and sitting down to weep and rail at the coldness and injustice of God, she rose up in the full vigor of her faith and strength, and "filling her purse with gold, and her lips with words of divine wisdom," went more actively than ever about her Master's work. "I want my heart on fire always," she declared, "not for self-delight, but to spread the gospel from pole to pole."

Noble woman! gracious benefactress of a struggling faith! how broad and beautiful the path in which you walked! how truly God-inspired the zeal that filled your loyal heart!

That she might have more to give to the cause of Him she loved so well, she sold her jewels, gave up her handsome equipage, reduced her expenditures, left her lovely home at Donnington Park, and went to dwell in one plainly and simply furnished. She built chapels in London, Brighton, and other places, and fitted up others from halls and theaters, and founded and maintained a college for young preachers in Wales. It has been said of her that she built chapels faster

than she could find preachers to take charge of them. Dividing England into six districts, she sent one of her preachers regularly into each, with instructions to "preach in every place, large or small," where there was a chance to sow one precious seed of the faith. In this way she had at her death encompassed almost the entire kingdom with the broad belt of Christian love and knowledge.

She sent money to Georgia to help support the orphan-house Whitefield had founded there, and still more to be used in the conversion of the Indians. In fact, she seemed never weary of giving so long as money remained in her coffers. It has been estimated that she gave no less than *half a million of dollars* to the cause of Methodism, besides many thousands in private charities. But even better, she gave her unswerving faith and earnest prayers.

At last, when the frosts of eighty-four winters had silvered her hair, and her feet had long refused to run apace with the active promptings of her loyal heart, this zealous and faithful servant was called to meet Him whom she had so devotedly served. Her last words were: "My work is done; I have nothing to do but go to my Father."



THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF METHODISM.

ALTHOUGH long opposed and persecuted from all sides, Methodism was now widely and rapidly extending. There were "societies" in almost every town of any size "from Newcastle to Land's End."

Besides the Wesleys and Whitefield there were four regular clergymen, in addition to half a dozen lay preachers—that is, those upon whom a bishop had not placed his hands in ordination—and numerous exhorters. Wesley believed the time was fully ripe for some sort of an organization among the clergy. There were many grave matters he wished to present to them, and in regard to which he desired their opinions. He therefore called a meeting, or conference, of these ministers, both regular and lay.

This conference, which was the first conference of Methodism, assembled at the old Foundry Church in London on Monday June 25, 1744. On the preceding Sunday the preachers had met and partaken of the Lord's Supper together. On the following Monday morning Charles Wesley preached before them a most impressive sermon. Every face wore an expression which showed that these true and tried men realized the grave importance of the work for which they were assembled. They felt as workmen who had come to lay the first stones in the foundation of a building the whole future strength and beauty of which depended upon them.

The conference having been opened with singing and prayer, the next step was to draw up rules and regulations for its government. These rules were very clear and simple, as every thing connected with Methodism up to that time had been, and as it has continued on down to the present time. The men who represented her clergy were themselves "single of eye," and had met in all simplicity and sincerity of mind.

In the grave matters before them they had come determined to inquire "as little children who have every thing to learn." They agreed that "every point should be examined from its foundation," that each one of them should be allowed "to speak freely what was in his heart," and that every question brought up before them should be "bolted to the bran." How well the foundation of the future building had been begun!

One question proposed at the very beginning of this conference deserves to be kept in perpetual remembrance: "How far does each agree to submit to the unanimous judgment of the rest?" With such a start as this it is no wonder that the conference maintained the utmost love and harmony. The proceedings show that throughout its entire session this free, fearless right of discussion was never once denied to any member.

Having settled its rules for government, the conference next proceeded to business. The first question brought up was, "What shall we teach?" The next, "What shall we do?" Two days were occupied in discussing the first, but out of it all came the one clear, decisive answer: "We shall teach repentance, faith, justification, sanctification, and the witness of the Spirit." To this day these five foundation stones of Methodism have in no wise been changed. The second question, of course, related to a withdrawal from the Church of England. They assuredly had every reason to desire to come out from a Church whose clergy and people had so shamefully

used them. But the hearts of these upright and sturdy first preachers of Methodism were of a kind that suffereth long and is patient. They kept close beside them the garments of charity with which to clothe their neighbors. Besides, they could not so soon tear themselves away from a Church at whose altars they had been for so long a time such earnest communicants. As to Wesley, while sharing these feelings he was also hopeful that the Church of England clergy would be so reached through "the extending revival" as to do away with the necessity of a separate Church. "Methodism," he confidently asserted, "will either be thrust out, or will leaven the whole Church." Both of these things have been accomplished. Thus, from the first, "secession from the Church" found no favor.

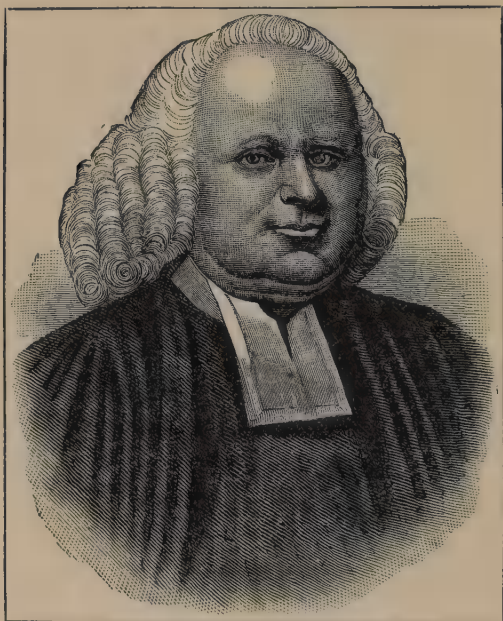
The suggestions brought up at this conference as to "the best general method of preaching" have never been improved upon. They were: (1) to invite; (2) to convince; (3) to offer Christ; lastly, to build up.

Two questions well considered at the time are of peculiar interest to us now. The first of these was, "Is it lawful to bear arms?" and the other, "Is it lawful to use the law?" Both were decided in the affirmative.

During the session of the conference Lady Huntingdon entertained its members at her mansion in London. In her parlors Wesley preached one of his most telling sermons: "What hath God wrought?" This was the first of the series of "household sermons" that gave to her ladyship's residence "the air

of a chapel." Wesley had two of his clergymen with him who took part in the services. Around him sat his lay preachers, his "peers in calling if not in churchly orders."

After a session of five days the conference adjourned, and each soldier of Christ went forth newly equipped and strengthened for the battle with sin and Satan.



GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

IN WALES.

KINDLING THE GOSPEL FLAME.

STILL ablaze with the holy zeal that had awakened the colliers of Kingswood, Whitefield passed on into Wales in 1739. It would be impossible to imagine a more deplorable state of affairs than at that time existed in the little principality, although at the period of Whitefield's first visit much had been done to alleviate matters through the efforts of two very zealous men. From the Middle Ages down to the time when the flame of the great revival known as Methodism had first been kindled within her mountain strongholds, darkness and superstition had reigned over Wales. It is true that in the days of James I. a clergyman by the name of Wroth had made earnest efforts to spread the light, but the small fire he had started had long since gone out, leaving only the cold, dead ashes. Nor was this darkness only a spiritual darkness: the ignorance of the people was hardly surpassed by that of the most benighted country on the face of the globe. Scarcely any of the lower classes could read at all. As to the morals of the country, they were so thoroughly corrupt that the name of Wales had long since become a synonym for all that was the most depraved in the human character. And in this respect there

was no difference between high and low, not even between the people and the clergymen. In short, "gluttony, drunkenness, and licentiousness prevailed through the whole country." The people knew not God, nor did those who were supposed to have their spiritual welfare at heart seem to care in the least to enlighten them. From the pulpit the name of the Saviour was scarcely ever spoken; or if it was, it was only in a vague and general way. The ministers of the few churches scattered through the principality were far more concerned as to what they should eat and drink than as to the starving souls of the miserable people. On Sundays, it is true, there were large congregations at the principal churches, for the poorer classes made it a rule to attend the services of the morning, doubtless as a kind of salve to their conscience for the riotous excesses of the afternoon.

Every Sabbath afternoon a Welsh game called "Achwaren-gamp" was regularly entered into. In this all the young men of the neighborhood gave a trial of their strength, and to see which the people came in great crowds—men, women, and children. On Saturday nights, especially during the summer months, the young men and women engaged in what they called "Nos werthian-cann," or singing eves. These singing eves consisted of various songs and tunes, either solos, duets, or choruses, in which the singers accompanied themselves on the harp, or oftener sung to the noisy clapping of hands and stamping of feet. Various dances were also engaged in. The singing eve generally extended into the

dawn of the Sabbath, when the festivities were brought to a close by the performance of a rustic drama. Sometimes these dramas lasted throughout the entire day. They were of the most questionable sort, and often many disgraceful scenes occurred. While the dramas were in progress at a hall or in some grove in the open air, a set of vagabonds called the "Bobl gerdded," or "walking men," paraded among the people, forcing them to give them all sorts of gifts. They then went for a march through the streets, singing, cursing, and shouting.

Notwithstanding their participation in these revelries, the Welsh are described at that time as a superstitious and even a gloomy people. They still retained many beliefs of paganism and not a few of the superstitious practices of popery. Especially was this displayed at their funerals, which we are told, "like those of the Irish, were scenes of riot and drunkenness, followed by prayers for the release of the deceased from the pains of purgatory." So blinded were they by their superstition that it is recorded that when Methodism was first introduced among them they used to cross their foreheads and mutter a prayer to a particular saint, as though it were some horrid beast against which they needed protection. Indeed, on first coming to preach among them, John Wesley declared them "as little versed in the principles of Christianity as a Creek or Cherokee Indian." He, however, added the striking remark that "notwithstanding their superstition and ignorance the people were ripe for the gospel, and most en-

thusiastically anxious to avail themselves of every opportunity of instruction."

This then was the people among whom the zealous and devoted Whitefield, glowing with a love divine, had hastened to spread the glad light of his Master's words. The flame had already been enkindled, as has been said, but so far had done but little more than begin to creep upward. Whitefield found there Griffith Jones, a pious clergyman of the Church of England, one of the few faithful among the faithless. Although wearing the robes of the Established Church, Jones was at heart a Methodist; and not only so at heart, but he was proclaiming it abroad. He was now going through the region preaching and teaching. He also employed teachers to hold regular exercises at different places for the instruction of the people "in Scripture, catechism, and song." When Whitefield came he found no less than one hundred and twenty-eight of these schools.

Howell Harris, another zealous Churchman, was also at this time forming "societies" after the pattern of those Wesley had organized in London, Bristol, and elsewhere. Harris, like the Wesleys, had been a student at Oxford, "but disgust at the infidelity and immorality which prevailed there" drove him away; and not only this, but he sought faithfully after a purer and nobler religion than that represented in the Churches of that day. He began preaching in barns, church-yards, on the streets, whenever and wherever he could find an audience. He made nothing of delivering five or six exhorta-

tions a day. He was often assailed by mobs, persecuted by the people, fined by the magistrates, and denounced by the clergy. But through it all he seemed to be "carried on the wings of an eagle triumphantly." He ever felt the near presence of his great Captain, and strong in faith he kept on unfalteringly through every trial.

Harris and Whitefield met at Cardiff, and there held meetings together. Each was in a flame of love and zeal. No wonder the blaze soon leaped from their hearts to others. But while many caught the fire of the Spirit, we must not imagine that all was ease and smooth sailing to the brave evangelists. During one of the first sermons Whitefield preached at the town-hall in Cardiff he was greatly annoyed by some evil-disposed persons. Desiring to break up the meeting, they trailed a dead fox outside the hall, and others hunted it with their dogs, several of them even coming into the hall. It was a noisy and a shameful scene; but Whitefield kept his stand immovably and went on with the sermon, his trumpet-like voice ringing high over all the discordant sounds. At another time two dogs were turned loose in the assembly and set to fighting, but the indignant men in the congregation had them put out.

In the afternoon of the same day that the dead fox had been trailed without the hall, Whitefield returned to the same spot and preached to one of the largest and most attentive audiences that had yet greeted him in Wales. Among his hearers were many of those who had sought to annoy him in the

morning, now painfully aroused to a knowledge of their sins and crying out for a release from the burden. Many similar scenes occurred. Whitefield says of one of these congregations: "Never did I see an assembly more melted down. The love of Jesus touched them to the quick." The awakening spread. Everywhere people were heard crying out under conviction of sin and beseeching to be saved.

At Usk, the pulpit of the church being denied him, Whitefield preached under a large tree to hundreds of people whose tear-drenched faces gave eloquent proof of the tumult within. A day later at Ponty-Pool the curate kindly offered him the church, but so great was the concourse assembled that it was impossible for the building to contain them. He therefore "went and preached to all the people in the field;" and so gracious were the results of this meeting that afterward he betook himself to his rest with "such unutterable peace as no one can conceive of but those who feel it."

The flames had more than leaped upward now—they had spread far and wide, as the fires of a forest that find only seasoned timber in their track.

* * *

JOHN WESLEY ITINERATING.

UPON a pressing invitation from Howell Harris, and urged by Whitefield, Wesley set out for Wales on Monday, October 15, 1739—going as a true itinerant, traveling on horseback and with no other luggage than a pair of scant saddle-bags.

His first sermon was at the foot of the Devaudon, a high hill two or three miles beyond Chepstow. There was some rude behavior, but altogether the congregation seemed to look upon him as a friend who had come to bring them a glad message which they should have heard long ago.

At two o'clock the next afternoon he stood preaching to about a thousand people, who, caring not that the frost was sharp, stood hanging upon his words as he described to them "the plain old religion of the Church of England," now everywhere spoken against "under the name of Methodism." It was an affecting scene, for though many of them understood English "tolerably well," yet the looks, the sighs, the gestures, and the groans of those who did not showed how eloquently God was speaking to their hearts through the voice of conviction. Men, women, and children were present, and almost to a soul they seemed "melted down into tears" together. Never had the pure gospel fire leaped forth more gloriously in Wales.

On the following morning, though the frost was "sharper than before," the people stood in rapt attention upon his words. The congregation had now considerably increased. There were loud cries, deep groans, and earnest prayers as he discoursed to them of that salvation which can come alone through faith—faith in Jesus the Saviour.

At the hour of noon he stopped at Usk to preach to a congregation of very poor people, and a wonderful effect was produced as he told them of that Sav-

iour who had come into the world to save rich and poor alike. Mothers clung to their children sobbing; with piercing cries wives threw their arms about their husbands' necks; old women fell upon their knees clasping their hands imploringly to Heaven. One gray-headed man wept and trembled so that it seemed body and soul must be sundered through the excess of his feelings. Old and young were alike affected, and, as at Kingswood among the colliers, "all were drenched in tears together." At this place he was joined by several of those to whom he had preached at Devaudon. They were as beings who had suddenly lost their minds, "mourning and refusing to be comforted till they had redemption through Christ's blood." With these Wesley talked long and earnestly, nor left till many had found that peace precious above all else.

At Ponty-Pool, being unable to obtain a more convenient place, Wesley stood in the streets and cried aloud to five or six hundred people, who had gathered about him, to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and they should be saved." Many melted into tears; others again cried aloud for mercy; two or three ran about throwing themselves into the air and distorting their limbs as though suddenly bereft of their senses. A few evil-inclined persons threw stones and clods of dirt, but no one was hurt. Here Wesley had a thrilling scene with a poor woman who had followed him from place to place since leaving Devaudon. There the bolt of conviction had pierced her heart; she strove to draw it out, to evade the Voice

that called to her, but there was no escape. Unable to endure the torture, she left her home and followed on after Wesley. She walked from Devaudon to Abergavenny; and just missing him there, she kept on to Usk. Meeting the same disappointment at the latter place, she pushed on to Ponty-Pool, and there came upon him just as he stood crying to the people, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!" These words added a second shaft to her wound, and in agony of spirit unbearable she sunk at Wesley's feet crying out to him to relieve her. Charitable hands quickly removed her to a lodging-place. There Wesley went and talked to her, and prayed God to heal her of her iniquities. Finally, about one o'clock in the morning, after one of the fiercest contests Wesley had ever seen, and during which the soul seemed nearly rent from the body, the Lord "got unto himself the victory." Stopping barely long enough to recruit exhausted nature, the woman arose and went on her way, singing and praising God.

At five o'clock in the afternoon Wesley reached Cardiff, where two or three months before Howell Harris and Whitefield had seen such pleasing results crown their efforts. Alas! the ardor of many had grown cold since then, while the ranks of the opponents had sensibly increased. But God's Spirit was still abroad with the power to move the waters. The church being refused him, Wesley preached in the Shire Hall, "a large, convenient place," on his favorite text, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved." Several "labored

much to make a disturbance." Squibs were thrown, and a few rotten eggs. There was also much loud talking and stamping of feet, intended to drown the voice of the speaker. But Wesley had not been preaching many minutes when these demonstrations changed to cries of conviction, loud groans, and convulsive sobs. At seven o'clock he preached at the same place to a larger audience. A number professed conversion, while many others, Wesley says, "went away believing our report."

On the next Friday morning he discoursed at Newport to "the most insensible, ill-behaved people he had ever seen in Wales." Many mocked him; others made faces and used all sorts of insulting epithets. Some did not stop short of violence. Various missiles were hurled, some of them narrowly missing the speaker. One "ancient man" during a greater part of the services "cursed and swore almost incessantly." He had in his hands a large stone which he made many attempts to hurl directly at Wesley's head, but was every time prevented by some one in the audience. "Such," exclaims Wesley with honest contempt, "were the champions, such the arms against Methodism!"

At four o'clock on the same afternoon Wesley preached again at the Shire Hall. Many of the gentry were present, and he deemed it a ripe occasion to rebuke them for their riotous excesses. Accordingly, with great freedom of speech, he held forth upon, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

He expected a great outcry against him—even to be stopped in the midst of his sermon by some one of the consequential magistrates present—but to his surprise there was no such result. Instead, many seemed cut to the heart, while over all was an air of serious thought. At the close of the meeting many pressed about him, entreating that he would make still clearer his words and show them more plainly how best to mend their ways.

At six o'clock, so deep and wide-spread had been the feeling, "almost the entire town" came together—such an assembly as the Shire Hall had scarcely held before. A quiet and respectful attentiveness pervaded the whole assembly. Never had Wesley preached with such force and power. Soon sinners began to fall on every side. So loud were their cries and groans that the preacher's voice could scarcely be heard. The meeting continued upward of three hours, and among those converted were a number of the gentry, some of whom had been the bitterest opponents of the Methodists. "May the seed they receive," prayed Wesley, "have its fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life!"

Even more astonishing results greeted Wesley on his second and third journeys into Wales. Everywhere he found the people aroused concerning their sins, and seeking to flee from the wrath to come. At Penreul, near Ponty-Pool, he called out, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!" and great indeed was the shaking. At another place many came to him after the meeting "in such mourning as he had

scarcely seen." A poor drunkard, who had heard him preach at noon of that day, came to him at midnight, and did not leave him until he was reclothed with new life.

By 1744 the truth had spread "with mighty effect" throughout Wales.



A TRUE HERO OF WALES.

AMIDST the mountain strongholds of the little principality of Wales a true hero had at length arisen—Howell Harris. For long ages the Welsh heart had fired at mention of the name of King Arthur the Peerless; but what was Arthur after all but "an undying name in romance?"—in history a mere nothing! Even the bold deeds of Llewellyn, the valiant Prince of Wales, immortalized in song and story, were as naught beside those of this man, who, to give the words of eternal life to his dying countrymen, faced death a hundred times over. No Welsh hero, either real or mythical, had so brave a heart as he. Their deeds sprung from a desire for glory; his from the pure love of Christ flaming in his heart and yearning pity for the lost souls of men. His experiences and trials year after year were indeed "past belief" and "beyond those of any other evangelist," as sharp as were some of their conflicts, as narrow as their escapes. Everywhere he was treated as "a monster ravaging the land." By men who called themselves gentlemen were the lowest and meanest of indignities heaped upon him. Even men of "wealth and

culture," clergymen and magistrates, incited mobs against him, and more than once paid them out of the coffers of the Church. "When I arose in the morning," he says, "I was in daily expectation of my crosses." And such crosses! Often it seemed that they were far beyond the strength of poor humanity to bear. But a higher Power sustained him. God blessed him with an inflexible courage, and "from conquering he went on to conquer."

At Newport, where he was preaching once, he was set upon by a mob that stripped the coat from his back, tore his trousers into shreds, and bore away his peruke at the top of a pole, leaving him in the rain, "bare-headed under the reproach of Christ." At another time they nearly drowned him with a flood of filthy water. Like Stephen of old, he was again and again treated to showers of stones. Many hit him, others tore through his clothing; but he stood unyielding, and brought away from the conflict a "bleeding brow, but an undaunted spirit."

While addressing a congregation at Caerleon, a fierce mob set upon him and his companion, a lay preacher by the name of Seward. Clubs and stones were used. In the midst of the conflict poor Seward became blind from blows upon the eyes; but still, in darkness as he was and suffering the intensest pain, he boldly remained at Harris's side, saying, "We had better endure this than hell." The stones gashed Harris's head, and one club struck him; but, with the blood pouring in streams from his face, he stood fearlessly looking upon the infuriated mob, nor did

he yield an inch of his ground until his sermon was finished.

Again, he had a thrilling experience at a funeral—one of those disgraceful scenes, or “wakes” as they were called, of riot and drunkenness. Taking his stand dauntlessly in their midst, he not only scourged them for the shamelessness of their behavior, but made a bold attack upon the superstitious practices of popery. Instantly he was besieged by a howling mob, shrieking like madmen. Many strove to reach him, swearing that he should die. Others tore at his clothing; some used clubs. He was bruised from head to foot and nearly stripped of his clothing, when at last he succeeded in releasing himself from the enraged assembly. But not until he had said every word he desired did he quit the scene.

At a fair he boldly denounced “the lying vanities” in which the whole scene was tricked out, and passionately urged the young people to turn from the evil of their ways, and seek Him who could alone guide their feet in the paths of peace and pleasantness. Water was thrown upon him, then eggs, rotten fruit, and clods of dirt. He was hissed, and finally driven from the grounds, but he returned with voice more trumpet-like than ever.

One Sunday, longing to hear from other lips a declaration of the way of truth and life, he attended the church of a leading clergyman. Alas, how bitter was his disappointment! Instead of a discourse sweetened with charity and fragrant with the essence of brotherly love and good-will, it was one of bitterest

hate—in short, a personal attack of the meanest sort, in which he was made to figure “as a minister to the devil, an enemy to God, to the Church, and to all mankind.” Not content to let the matter end with this tirade, the clergyman from his pulpit called upon his congregation to join with him “in putting down such a man,” at the same time pointing him out. They were only too ready to comply. After the meeting, they set upon him as he was going away from the church and stoned him until it seemed a miracle that he got home with any life left in his poor bruised and broken body. “For such times,” said John Wesley, “God made such men.”

While preaching in another place, where a riot was threatened, a gun was presented to his forehead; but even when the weapon seemed almost certain to be discharged, his soul, he tells us, “was happy.” Another rioter struck him on the mouth “until the blood came;” others covered him with mud and water and gunpowder. He left the spot, procured a change of clothing, washed himself, dressed, and returned to continue his preaching.

Is it surprising that with such efforts as these he should have “reformed Wales?”—that he should have become to her people, at last, awakened and Christianized through his labors, such a hero as the good and true delight to honor? What were the deeds of the mythical Arthur, of the bold Llewellyn, to his? Through his agency thousands were brought to Christ. His name is yet in Wales “a household word.”

His health at last failing under these trials, he went to live at Trevecca, in the place where Lady Huntingdon afterward founded her famous college in an old castle of one of the former lords of Snowdon, Harris's home is described by Wesley as one of the most charming he had seen in Wales. "There were walks in a wood, a mound raised in a meadow, commanding a delightful prospect, and a large and beautiful house." Surely, after so fierce a warfare, the battle-scarred soldier was entitled to such a retreat.

Disabled in body as he was, he did not rest from his labors. He had as many as a hundred residents beneath his roof—chiefly poor young men, employed in various ways about the estate, and many of whom he was training to go forth as bold exhorters in the cause which ill health had forced him to abandon. He preached to them every morning "at their rising," and was constantly admonishing them to be instant in praising and serving the Lord. His little company of itinerants soon went forth to besiege and possess the land in the name of Him who has promised to redeem Israel from her iniquities.

The war between England and France in America being threatened, he asked of his young men which of them, being "first earnest with the Lord in prayer," would go to battle for king and country. Five went "in the strength of the Lord." Harris equipped them out of his private means, and prayed for their welfare. Whitefield gave them a motto: "Fear nothing while Christ is Captain."

When an invasion from France was threatened,

some years later, Harris himself entered the king's service, and for three years bravely did duty in his captain's uniform. He carried his Methodism into camp, into battle; he preached it on every side, often when his regiment was on the march, in some of the most ignorant and depraved districts of all England. The usual persecutions came. Not once did he flinch.

But at last death overtook him--his hero-days were numbered. On the ceiling of his sick-room was gilded "the awful, glorious name of Jehovah." It gleamed in letters of living flame before his dying eyes, it burst in a strain of rapture from his stiffening lips. To this day many pilgrims from Methodist shores gaze upon it in awe and reverence. All Wales wept as one man when on the day of his burial "devout men" bore to the tomb a faithful lover of Christ Jesus, a true hero of the people, a saint well meet for the Master's eternal kingdom.



CHARLES WESLEY'S LAST NIGHT IN WALES.

THE last night of Charles Wesley's first visit to Wales was a stormy one. He had arrived at Cardiff, from which point he expected to take passage by water for a return to Bristol. With him were Howell Harris and a company of devout people. They had been aiding him for the past three or four nights in a series of meetings he had been holding in the place. So successful had these meetings proved that they had attracted public attention from the theater, leaving the play-house almost bare of an audience, while

the crowds flocked to the hall where the revival was in progress. This so angered the players that they determined to be revenged. Accordingly, joined by such of the populace as regarded the meetings with hostility, and headed by a certain physician who had taken great offense at one of Wesley's sermons, they prepared to assault the preacher and his associates.

That night, just as the Methodists had begun their services by the singing of a hymn, the mob set upon the house. They found no trouble in effecting an entrance, as the doors were open. On reaching Wesley the physician attempted to strike him with a cane, but in the confusion that now arose he was tripped up and fell to the floor, cursing and swearing horribly as he went down. After beating about with his sword like a madman for several minutes, and injuring several persons, he was finally carried out raving, and foaming at the mouth.

At the first lull in these hostilities two magistrates, thinking to find ample excuse now to arrest the Methodists, broke into the house; but after a number of inquiries they decided that it would be no loss of valor on their part to retire more quietly than they had come. They had no sooner disappeared than the players returned with an increased rabble, and began to besiege the building. The doors having been secured, they found it difficult to effect an entrance, and so remained without, cursing, shouting, and making all sorts of vile threats. Their principal ground of complaint was that "the gospel had

starved them out." But disregarding the uproar outside, the little company within sung on undismayed.

About midnight one of the actors succeeded in effecting an entrance into the house. He had a drawn sword in his hand, and his air was that of a desperately determined man. He sprung toward Wesley, but the weapon was wrested from him, and while howling like an insane creature he was borne away and thrust without the door.

"When the sword was brought in," says Wesley, "the spirit of faith was kindled at sight of the danger. Great was our rejoicing and the uproar of the players without, who strove to force their way after their companion."

The hour having arrived for Wesley to go on board the vessel, his friends sought to dissuade him from it, as the tumult had not yet ceased. But he was resolute, and walked calmly through the midst of the rabble to the dock where his ship lay. Although there were many threatening gestures and a sea of scowling faces on every side, yet no one offered to molest him. Reaching the shore safely, he stood with his friends rendering hearty thanks to God.

Learning that the vessel would be delayed some hours, he walked back through the scowling populace and found Howell Harris and many of the devout company still assembled. He preached again, and in his audience now were several of those who had been his bitter opponents of the night. They stood around him weeping, and entreating him to

show them how they should escape the burden of their sins.

Before sailing that day, Wesley called upon a magistrate and presented him with the sword that had been taken from the player on the preceding night.

* * *

THE TORMENTED WOMAN.

It was during Mr. Wesley's tenth visit to Wales that a scene occurred which showed how strongly the poor Welsh people still clung to their dark superstitions even after the glad light of the gospel had broken in upon them. He was preaching at Llanfrynion. Many scenes of unusual power had accompanied his labors. Among one of the most marked of his conversions was that of a poor woman, whom her neighbors declared "Satan had bound in an uncommon manner for several years." She was deeply convicted under the first sermon she heard Wesley preach. After her conversion she followed him to the house where he lodged, and there standing before him, and in the presence of a large gathering of people, she related those remarkable experiences that had bound her "as Satan's own" for upward of seven years. She seemed fully to believe every word that she uttered, and to still cling to the old superstitious weaknesses, though the light of Christ Jesus had been shed upon her heart. So well-nigh impossible is it to efface in a moment the fancies and growths of a life-time!

The woman stated that about seven years previous

to that time she had seriously offended one of her neighbors, who thereupon went to one Francis Morgan, a well-known man of magic in those parts, and paid him fourteen shillings "to do his worst to her." The next night while she was in bed there came on a violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, in the midst of which she felt "all her flesh shudder," and knew that Satan was assuredly close at hand. At the same time a horse which she kept in the stable below, and which had always conducted itself "as quiet as a lamb," now began to leap to and fro and to tear about in such a manner that she was obliged to go and turn it out. She had barely returned when a tree which stood at the end of the house was torn up by the roots. From that time forth she had no rest day nor night, being not only in the greatest torture of mind but feeling always as though red-hot pinchers were tearing at her flesh—which proved that Satan had not yet taken his departure, but was lingering at her side to torment her all he could. She had had no respite from these horrors until the hour when she felt that God had mercifully delivered her and bruised Satan under her feet.

Let us hope that with the dawning of this much of the truth the poor woman was finally led into the clear, strong light of perfect knowledge, before which all the hideous phantoms of superstition fled as the shadows of night before the morning sun. It was often in such grim powers as these that Methodism found more stubborn foes than in the most sullen and determined mob.

CHARLES WESLEY PREACHING UPON HIS KNEES.

MANY thrilling and pathetic scenes characterized the onward march of Methodism through the little principality of Wales, but we doubt if that of Charles Wesley has a parallel—preaching upon his knees when deprived of the use of his limbs by a fall.

While on his way to keep an appointment with one of the “societies,” in an out-of-the-way place, he slipped and fell, so badly injuring one of his legs as to be unable to stand upon it. Luckily some of the brethren were with him, and they quickly raised him and carried him into a rude hut near by. Although suffering the most acute pain, he spent two hours in singing, praying, and talking to his companions. They, deeply solicitous, did all they could to ease his sufferings. “Their love,” he says, “quite delighted me.”

The next morning at six o'clock, even in his maimed condition, he insisted on meeting the society. After vainly remonstrating, his brethren consented to convey him thither. At eight o'clock, a surgeon having been secured, his leg was dressed, and then Charles Wesley showed more plainly than ever the true mettle of which he was made by persisting in his determination to keep on to Wales in order to fill his appointments. He was thus carried about from place to place, preaching daily upon his knees. His brethren tried to get him to address his congregations sitting in a chair, but that he deemed too indolent an attitude for a King's soldier.

The first time he attempted to deliver his discourse

standing upon his knees he nearly fainted from the pain, but the fortitude to endure grew stronger day by day. Once he spoke "kneeling in a pouring rain," but he tells us he "felt no pains or weariness till it was over," so wonderfully was he upheld by the grace of his Master.

At Cardiff a man who had been one of the most violent persecutors of the Methodists sent his Bath-chair to convey the disabled evangelist to his next appointment. Wesley was deeply touched by this thoughtful attention, so directly in contrast with the rough usage to which he and others of his fellow-laborers in the Methodist ranks had previously been subjected. "Indeed," he writes, "the whole place at present seems turned toward us."

It was several weeks before Wesley's leg healed so that he could walk upon it, but in all this time he ceased not from his labors, preaching regularly twice each day. For nearly two weeks he preached upon his knees, then, as his wound began to heal, standing upon his crutches. "The word of God," he wrote, "is not bound if I am, but runs very swiftly." His entire history shows no higher evidence than this that the genuine Methodist fire—that which is "born of love for Jesus and the souls of men"—glowed within his heart.



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IN IRELAND

THE STRONGHOLD STORMED.

TO the Wesleys fell the honor and the peril of making the first bold charge against the stronghold of Satan in Ireland. "I take the world for my parish," John Wesley had declared with all the deep fervor of a pure and consecrated devotion; and with this noble sentiment burning as a holy flame within his heart, he went boldly to the rescue of a land perhaps the most peculiarly cursed on earth.

For three hundred years prior to this time Ireland had been "the scandal and perplexity of its rulers." In no country under the sun had there been so blighting a mixture of misrule, oppression, and misery. As to its religious condition, justly had it been pronounced "the most singular anomaly of European history since the Reformation;" for of all countries to which the blessed light of that Reformation was offered, Ireland alone wholly and persistently refused it. Blinded either through pure ignorance or the more baneful envelopment of unjust and unreasoning prejudice, she had obstinately turned her back upon the new religion and stood stubborn in her adherence to the Church of Rome. Bitter indeed has been the punishment, for the intense fanaticism with which her people clung to popery has

prevented a harmonious assimilation with the rest of the British Empire, and through the failure of which have arisen "those abuses in its political administration" that have put upon her neck so great a yoke of oppression, tumult, and degradation.

But although ninety-nine out of every hundred of native-born Irish people remained immovable in the religion of Rome, still Protestantism in one form managed to creep into Ireland; yet better, far better would it have been if such as this had staid away. The clergymen of the few Protestant churches that were established in Ireland were in nine cases out of ten the younger sons of titled families who had been accustomed to the most riotous habits—sporting, drinking, card-playing, and the like. They had nothing to recommend them save their college degree, and often this had been obtained through no particular mental endowment of their own. Hence there was a general lack of education, both literary and moral. These men did not hesitate, even in their sacred robes, to mix in all the dissipated excesses of the neighborhood. They occupied prominent places at horse-races, they put up their bets publicly, and swaggered with the air of professional gamblers when they won. They played cards for money, even with their own parishioners, and unblushingly showed themselves to the eyes of all in a state of the most beastly intoxication.

And as these godless young clergymen relaxed in watchfulness and in uprightness of morals, just so, in a like proportion, the alertness and cunning of the

Catholic priests increased. While the former were at the horse-races or the card-table, passing in these shameless excesses the hours that should have been given to pastoral work, the latter were undertaking that pastoral work for them—that is, undertaking it according to a plan of their own. Ignorant of the truth, unenlightened and unstrengthened by those who should have been their spiritual instructors and guides, the people became an easy prey to the cunning of the Catholic priests. They visited the beds of the sick and the dying, they wrought upon their fears or worked upon their superstitions. They told them of the Church of Rome, of the wonderful power her priests had possessed through hundreds of years; of the saints and the blessed Virgin who could, upon certain conditions, help them out of all trouble. It is no wonder that the Protestant churches were soon drained at this rate, many of those in the rural districts being allowed to fall entirely into ruins.

Thus, in 1747, when John Wesley first turned his eyes upon Ireland he found that whereas not one in a hundred of the natives had left the religion of Rome, fully ninety out of the hundred on the other hand had renounced Protestantism for the faith of the former Church. It was truly an uninviting state of affairs, and one that embraced perils of the most assured kind, for well he knew how desperately and vindictively these priests would repel any attempt upon their stronghold.

It is true that in 1738 Whitefield had been in Ire-

land, and there for a few days had fearlessly and vehemently lifted up his voice for the new faith. It was while on his return from his first visit to Georgia. His vessel touched at the port of Limerick. There he had been hospitably received and encouraged to preach by Bishop Birsough. From Limerick he had passed on to Dublin, still under the protection of bishops and various other powerful prelates. But his visit had not seemed to arouse the people much. It doubtless created a greater sensation among the Protestants themselves than it did among the Catholics.

Certain it is that when John Wesley first looked upon this wretched country with the yearning eye of a devoted evangelist Protestantism was "feeble and waning;" and we cannot doubt, studying the case as it stood before his coming, and as he left it, that without him and his consecrated work, and that of his brother, Protestantism would in time have entirely disappeared from the island.

On August 9, 1747, John Wesley reached Dublin. That day he preached at St. Mary's cathedral to "as gay and careless a congregation" as he had ever been called upon to face. The curate of this charge treated him very politely, but when Wesley suggested a system of lay preaching whereby the people might be reached and enlightened more easily, he displayed an immovable prejudice. The archbishop also treated this suggestion as "an extraordinary novelty." Undismayed, however, by this opposition, Wesley at once began his own independent labors. On mak-

ing inquiries he was greatly surprised and pleased to learn that a lay preacher by the name of Thomas Williams had already founded a "society" in Dublin similar to those which the Methodists had formed in England, Wales, and elsewhere. This society contained nearly three hundred members. Wesley found them "strong in the faith," and was exceedingly rejoiced to come upon these heroes of the cross in the very midst of the enemy's stronghold.

The more Wesley studied the Irish people, their character and their ways, the more he became impressed with the cordial Irish spirit. He pronounced them the politest people under the sun, and began to entertain very pleasant doubts of the peril he had anticipated. Alas! he had as yet caught but one view of their many-sided character. The "roaring lion" was there as well as the docile lamb, as he was after awhile to learn too painfully.

On this first visit he preached constantly and without molestation at the chapel of Williams's society, which had been a Lutheran church. The house and the yard were continually thronged with hearers. Many times he had to preach out-of-doors, so as to give all a chance to hear him. And at these gatherings not only the poor people were present, but the wealthy ones as well. They continued to treat him with the greatest politeness, and to listen with the most rapt attention to what he had to say. Soon this "excessive cordiality" began to raise much uneasiness in Wesley's mind. "On this very account," he wrote, "they must be watched over with the more

care, being equally susceptible of good and ill impressions." He had rightly gauged them, and it was not long before he had unpleasantly witnessed just how very susceptible they could be to the ill impressions as well as the good.

On the 23d of August, having spent two weeks among these seemingly quiet and cordial people, and having preached a touching farewell discourse to an immense assembly, Wesley took passage for England.

Two weeks later Charles Wesley came over, accompanied by Charles Perronet, a son of the vicar of Shoreham, England. Prepared by the glowing accounts his brother had given him to meet a mild and cordial people, Charles Wesley was all the more shocked to learn of the violent and disgraceful scenes that had taken place during the past two weeks. The "roaring lion" had indeed broken forth, completely swallowing up all traces of the passive lamb. The mob had assembled almost upon Wesley's departure. Incited by the priests, they had entered the little chapel, torn up and destroyed its furniture, stealing what there was worth stealing, and afterward making a bonfire in the street of the seats, window-facings, doors, and pulpit. But their fiendish spirit did not stop here. After demolishing the chapel all they could, and destroying its contents, they set upon the members of the society, beating them with clubs and threatening to murder every one who returned to the chapel or the chapel-yard for worship. It was, in short, a typical Irish mob, "bristling with shillalahs, and triumphant with noise."

The Methodists appealed to the mayor. He felt disposed to protect them, but dared not in the face of the pressure brought to bear upon him from other directions. Even the grand jury threw out the bills made against the rioters. Charles Wesley was urged by his friends not to attempt to preach publicly in the present excited state of feeling. But he was not intimidated. Still, after considerable persuasion, he consented to meet the society privately. His mission in Dublin was soon discovered, however, and he was constantly subjected to all manner of indignities on the streets, and frequently to violence.

A short time previous to Wesley's coming, John Cennick, one of the Methodist lay preachers, had delivered a sermon in Dublin on "The babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes in a manger." A popish hearer, who knew little if any thing of the Bible, deemed this text a Protestant device to ridicule the infant Saviour, and so told the occurrence abroad. "Swaddler" soon grew into a by-word, and in a little while was firmly fixed upon the Methodists as a nickname. "Swaddler! Swaddler!" cried the people after Charles Wesley on the streets. Even the children shouted it, and tossed stones and lumps of mud by way of emphasizing it. More than one "long-range club" was shaken in his face; he felt the force of formidable shillalah upon head and shoulder; he was spit upon and pelted with every conceivable missile; but he stood it all with his usual fortitude, and, having his way, now preached daily in the most open manner upon the streets or in the parks. Many ter-

rible scenes were enacted. The mob scarcely ever gave over until some one had been killed. After a week of such preaching, Wesley, sick at heart, writes: " 'Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers,' of which the city is full."

Once a Methodist was knocked down, fearfully hacked with knives, and thrown into a cellar to die. Another was covered with the many stones that had been hurled upon him, while his blood trickled in crimson streams through the openings, staining all before it. Still another, a feeble man, was run over and then stamped upon until he died. In the very midst of one of Wesley's sermons a woman was beaten to death before his eyes. Such scenes made his heart sick and his blood run cold. Nor was he himself beyond danger. He had many narrow escapes, the Lord wonderfully preserving him. Once a constable who was sent to defend him was struck down, kicked and dragged about until life was extinct, and then hanged in triumph, no one offering any interference. At another time young Perronet, who had interposed his person as a shield for Wesley, was struck and severely hurt.

But at last the power of the gospel subdued even these savage natures. There came a time when Charles Wesley stood on Dublin Green, preaching to an assembly whose tears and cries almost drowned his voice. It was one of the most impressive scenes in his whole experience. He continued after that to preach regularly once a day, and sometimes five times a day. He built a chapel, a far bet-

ter one than the old society had occupied. It was a happy and yet a solemn time as they came into it "out of great tribulation." Wesley preached to them a most comforting sermon of Him who would in his own good time "wipe all tears from their eyes."

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THE BATTLE SPREADING.

IN the meantime, several preachers had been sent into the country. Soon there was the glad news of glorious awakenings at many places.

Charles Wesley went from Dublin into the interior. At every opportunity along the way he stopped to sow some seed of the Master's word—a little here, a little there—breathing out upon each as it fell the consecration of fervent prayer, and leaving all to mature in the sunshine of hope and faith. His heart was peculiarly touched by one thing on this journey: on every side he heard the loved old Methodist hymns and tunes sung and whistled by the Irish children. Even at that early day in his career the Irish love of song and music was serving the evangelist a helpful turn. Hundreds were thus touched and won over who otherwise would have remained stubborn and unyielding. An ardent poet and lover of music himself, it warmed Charles Wesley's heart inexpressibly to hear his own compositions passing so musically from mouth to mouth. Many stirring scenes occurred. Dangers were everywhere present, persecutions arose in every conceivable form, but from end to end of the Christian battle-line not a soldier faltered.

At Wexford a ridiculous yet thrilling scene took place. It had been given out that Charles Wesley would preach that day in a barn near the town. A plot was at once inaugurated for the destruction of the barn while the meeting was in progress, and for scattering and belaboring the people. With a view to the success of the plot, the leader hid himself in a sack inside the barn, so as to be able to give his accomplices the signal at the proper time. When the singing began, so deep in its melody, so rich in its pathos, a wonderful thing happened. The man in the sack was so profoundly touched that he lost all consciousness of his surroundings and began to sway to and fro, keeping time to the music. At last, under the prayer, which was most powerful and soul-reaching, he roared out with remorse and conviction, trembling so that the sack shook as if there had been an earthquake within. At first the people were greatly frightened, believing that Satan was in the sack, but finally it was pulled off, when, lo! there stood a weeping, crouching, praying creature, pleading with them to save him from eternal damnation. Conversion soon followed conviction. It proved to be one of the soundest awakenings in all Wesley's experience.

At Tyrrell Pass the whole town assembled to hear Wesley. "Never," he writes, "have I spoken to hungrier souls. They devoured every word. Some expressed their satisfaction in a way peculiar to them, and *whistled* for joy. Few such feasts have I had since I left England. It refreshed my body more

than meat or drink. God has begun a great work here."

At Athlone a furious mob, stirred up by the Catholic priests, awaited him. Stones were thrown, clubs were swung, and fierce howls rent the air. One of Wesley's companions was knocked from his horse, trampled upon, and nearly killed. Many Protestants turned out in favor of the Methodists. The result was a fierce collision, which soon grew so serious that the dragoons had to be called out. This, instead of quelling the riot, seemed only to increase it; but without a tremor Wesley walked through the violently agitated mass to the market-house, where he intended to preach. However, finding that the building would not accommodate a third of his hearers, he took his stand in an open window and discoursed to the multitude below. Some violence was attempted, but soon a hush fell upon all. The sermon was one of unusual power and fervor, seeming to penetrate to many hearts with wonderful effect. There were loud cries for mercy, deep groans of conviction, and more than one sincere conversion.

At Moat the scenes were deeply affecting. Hearts were stirred as they had never been stirred before. But the usual mob was there, hurling stones, brandishing shillalahs, and knocking down those who attempted to press up nearer the preacher. Several large drums and one or two trumpets were also brought out with the hope of drowning his voice and forcing him from the scene; but the courageous servant of God kept his place through all the tumult.

Journeying on to Phillipstown, he encountered a scene calculated to arouse enthusiasm in the most dejected heart. He was met by a party of dragoons, who had all been turned "from darkness into light" through the power of Methodism. They had formed themselves into a society, and were meeting regularly three times a week in earnest, helpful service.

On his return journey to Dublin, Charles Wesley everywhere met with the blessings of hundreds of those whom his words had led to the light of the only true salvation—through Jesus, the Saviour. He found the society at Dublin considerably increased in numbers and greatly strengthened in faith by the glowing reports that had come to them from various parts of the battle-field now so broadly extending.

John Wesley came for his second visit to Dublin on March 8, 1748. He had with him one of his regular helpers named Meriton, and Robert Swindells, a lay preacher. He entered the new chapel on Cork street just as his brother was in the midst of his sermon. Great was the people's joy on seeing him. Later, when he attempted to speak, his voice could scarcely be heard, so great was the noise of those praising and blessing God for his return. He preached daily in Dublin, both in the chapel and on the green. His first sermon began at five o'clock. At the opening there was great opposition to this unusual hour for holding public worship; but he remained firm against attacks and persuasions alike. It must often have appealed very strongly to his humorous side to see the pictures presented by some of

these half-dressed, half-awake, yawning, nodding worshipers at the early morning services. But in proportion as their zeal and earnestness increased their dilatory habits received a spur, until soon the most exacting preacher could not have complained of the wide-awake, attentive audiences that greeted Wesley in the early morning light on the Dublin Green.

Following the example of his brother, John Wesley also left Dublin and began to travel from place to place. At Phillipstown there was a memorable scene as he confirmed the party of converted dragoons; at Clara a remarkable one as he stood preaching to hundreds of the rich gentry seated within their coaches. At Athlone he was deeply affected at the sight which greeted him as from the same window of the market-place in which his brother had stood he discoursed to a congregation that swayed from side to side like the waves of a troubled sea. On his return, however, he had a different scene at this place. Just as the people had assembled to hear him preach, the priests came and "drove them away before them like a flock of sheep." Undismayed by this event, Wesley preached in the evening on "The terrors of the law" in the "strongest manner he was able." Either the priests had not found out about this second meeting or the people had gotten over their fear of the morning and were determined to stand their ground. At any rate, they stood and heard him through, visibly affected. While they seemed literally to devour every word, yet, from

the knowledge that experience had given him of the Irish character, Wesley was much "afraid that very few of his words were properly digested." Still he describes them as "an immeasurably loving people," and when he left there was such a falling of tears as he had never witnessed on a similar occasion. It is true that they might have been only "the drops before the shower," but surely the rain would fall in rich abundance after awhile.

At Tullamore the people stood in the midst of a rain-storm unmoved, listening to his words of exhortation. As a mark of respect they stood with their heads uncovered, nor could all his persuasions induce them to protect their heads against the fall of the hail-stones.

After spending three months in Ireland, Wesley returned to England. At the end of two months more his brother came again to Dublin. He found the society there still on the increase. At Cork wonderful success had crowned the efforts of the lay preachers left there. He began preaching in fields and on the streets to crowds of hearers. Several times his audience numbered as many as ten thousand, Papists as well as Protestants. Even the clergy of the city flocked to hear him. When he preached in a building the altars were constantly crowded with those who had been among the bitterest persecutors of the little society of Methodists. Methodism had indeed entered Ireland "never to be overthrown there." The battle had been stormy and wide-spread, but before such brave, persistent fighting as that done by

her soldiers many of the enemy's strongest outposts had been successfully stormed and carried. But the conflict had by no means subsided, as we shall soon see.

* * *

THE STORM AT CORK.

WONDERFUL as was the success of his efforts at Dublin, Charles Wesley nevertheless experienced a feeling of uneasiness. He knew the Irish nature too well by this time—in short, human nature as he had seen it elsewhere—to believe that this feeling of hearty good-will, of quick, impetuous conviction, could long remain firm under other and different influences. He therefore kept close watch for genuine conversions, and as soon as such converts were brought into the society he began to prepare them for the outbreak which he feared would follow. It was well he did, for scarcely had he turned his back upon Cork when the storm burst. The trouble came through one Butler, a ballad-singer, who also pretended to be a clergyman. Arraying himself in a clerical gown, with the Bible in one hand and his ballads in the other, he went through the streets denouncing the Methodists, and everywhere stirring up the people to violence against them. He declared them veritable monsters, wolves in disguise, who as soon as they attained to power would not hesitate to show their teeth. The people became so excited that they armed themselves with swords, clubs, and weapons of every description, and began to fall upon the hapless Methodists without mercy. Men, women, and

children were knocked down in the streets and trampled upon. Some were shockingly mutilated or dangerously wounded by sword thrusts. Their houses were assailed and many of them entirely demolished. Furniture was broken up, clothing torn into shreds, and bonfires made of the most valuable articles. One of the members, who was a merchant of position and property, applied to the authorities for protection and the apprehension and punishment of the rioters. He only had his trouble for his pains. Another member, even while they were pulling down his house and destroying his furniture, ran to the mayor and bade him come quickly to the spot and see for himself. But the mayor's only action after he got there was to cry out to the persecuted Methodists: "It is your own fault for entertaining the preachers; if you will turn them out of your houses, I will engage that no harm shall be done, but if you will not you must take the consequences."

Fired by this cowardly answer, one of the Methodists retorted that this was a very extraordinary mode of proceeding on the part of a Protestant government; that he was well assured that if at that moment the Methodists had a Catholic priest saying mass in every room of their houses not one would be touched. To this the mayor made the outrageous retort that "the priests were protected, but the Methodists were not." Hearing this, the crowd approved by a wild hurraing and a heavier shower of stones than ever, while the destruction of the house and its contents was completed right under the mayor's eyes.

This weak and cowardly conduct on the part of the authorities seemed all the more to encourage the mob. Indeed, they looked upon it as an unmistakable encouragement of their course, and were more fierce and reckless than ever in committing outrages. Butler now showed himself everywhere. He ranged the streets, still armed with his ballads and the Bible. He stood on the corners surrounded by drunken crowds, shouting, "Five pounds for the head of a Swaddler!"

The Methodists and their friends endeavored to have Butler and his lawless vagabonds indicted by the grand jury, but without avail. No less than twenty-eight depositions were made out and verified by scores of witnesses, all of them persons of the highest standing; but every one of these depositions was thrown out, and in its stead was "a remarkable presentment" made by this same grand jury, which to this day stands a foul blot upon the city records. Well might John Wesley pronounce this document "worthy to be preserved in the annals of Ireland throughout all succeeding generations," since it read as follows: "We find and present Charles Wesley to be a person of ill-fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of His Majesty's peace, and we pray that he may be transported."

Charles Wesley was safe in London when this remarkable judgment of his character was rendered by these "enlightened Hibernians." Nine others were indicted with him, eight of them preachers, and one whose only crime had consisted in hospitably enter-

taining these preachers at his home. Butler and his vagabond crew were jubilant over this indictment, but they soon began to feel differently in the light of what followed. At the Lent assize of the King's Court all the preachers who were in the kingdom banded together and presented themselves before this high tribunal, asking a just and thorough examination of the charges on both sides. They had now to deal with the king's own magistrates, who conducted matters upon altogether a different plan from the corrupt grand jury at Cork.

Butler was the first witness examined. "What is your calling?" was sternly asked him. "I sing ballads," was the answer after some hesitation. "Here," exclaimed the judge, indignantly lifting his hands, "here are six gentlemen indicted as vagabonds, and the first accuser is a vagabond by profession!" The next witness said he was "an anti-Swaddler," and altogether treated this august body with such downright disrespect that he was ordered away and fined for contempt of court. The preachers were triumphantly acquitted, but the reign of Butler and his fiendish disciples was not yet over.

On coming to Cork in 1750 John Wesley was subjected to the greatest violence. More than once the preservation of his life seemed little less than a miracle. While he was preaching in the chapel on one occasion the furniture, windows, and floor were torn out and a bonfire made of them in the streets. Several in the congregation were knocked down and badly hurt. Men, women, and children were tram-

pled underfoot, and Wesley himself was severely bruised.

He went from Cork to Bandon to preach. The mob followed him. They went in a motley, disorderly procession, hooting and yelling like mad creatures. But the worst they did there was to hang Wesley in effigy. The disgraceful and violent scenes at Cork continued unabated for over a week. Under the very gaze of the mayor and his subordinates they marched about the streets with angry shouts and menaces. They attacked and demolished houses; they assaulted innocent people; they even had the audacity to post up notices, with the mayor's name attached, advising assaults on certain citizens and the destruction of their houses. "Down with the Swaddlers!" read these bills, "and with all citizens who dare entertain them and their preachers!"

But a power soon arose on the side of the Methodists—the only power, perhaps, of which these lawless mobs stood really in dread—the military. Under the Methodist preaching scores of stanch, bold soldiers soon became converts. It did not take them long to show the determination with which they intended to defend the helpless people so long and so shamefully abused by both the civil authorities and the uncivil rabble. Under the point of the bayonet or the flash of the sword the mob slunk away nerveless and cowed.

As to Butler, he met the miserable end he deserved. In a riot at Waterford he got into a quarrel with some of his associates. It soon merged into a regular hand-to-hand fight, in which Butler lost an

arm. He lingered on for a few years in poverty and suffering, shunned by all respectable people, and at last died a hopeless death.

Meanwhile, however, Methodism grew and flourished in Cork. In but few places in hapless Ireland did it take so permanent a root. A handsome and spacious chapel was erected, and the society grew to such proportions that other buildings became necessary. As the Methodists had been "reviled for the name of Christ," so at last "the spirit of glory and of God rested upon them," and many were "the living and dying witnesses of the power of true religion.'

Only a year or so later, on a subsequent visit to Cork, Wesley was entertained by the mayor at his mansion-house, and his presence was considered "a high honor to the city." So do times change and people change with them. So does that which is true and pure and steadfast win its recognition as surely as the water trickling drop by drop wears the hardest crust away.

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THE DEAF-MUTE CONVERTED.

ONE of the most remarkable conversions that greeted the Methodists in Ireland was that of the deaf-mute at Antrim. He was truly a vicious character—hardened, revengeful, and dangerous when aroused. From his youth up to his twenty-sixth year he had followed with a reckless abandon after the most notorious of the vices—cock-fighting, horse-racing, gambling, drunkenness, and the like. It was not known

when the power of God began to make itself felt within the darkened chambers of his heart. Conscience had doubtless been at work for some time before he began to attend the meetings of the Methodists. He could not hear a word that was uttered, but his eyes could follow every expression of the preacher's face, every gesture of the hand or movement of the lips. He could also see the working faces of other persons, tears streaming from their eyes, their hands clasped in earnest supplication to God. He was compelled to *feel*, though he could not hear. God alone knew the workings of that darkened, imprisoned soul, unable to communicate intelligently with others, unable to receive communications intelligently from them. But his conversion was none the less thorough and genuine; and soon he learned to hold communication with those about him—to tell them his weaknesses, doubts, and needs, and to receive from them strength and enlightenment. He became one of the most upright citizens and a devoted member of the society. He quit all his vices, refused to work on Sunday, and even on any day at any thing the least questionable. Unable to speak to his fellow-men and exhort them to a better way of living, he let his life speak for him, which after all was more effective than the most powerful sermon. When one of the preachers was expected in the town he went from house to house summoning the people to the services, so afraid was he that some might fail to attend. When converted he could not read, but afterward, through the devotedness of his brethren in

the society, he learned by heart many of the precious truths of the Bible, and was able to find their place upon the page.

It was one of the most thrilling and pathetic scenes in all Methodist history to see this man eagerly snatch up the sacred volume, and, standing before those who had not yet learned "the way, the truth, the life," point to the text with a "wild, screaming voice," while he besought them with eyes that shed "floods of tears." It was enough. A hundred sermons could not have said more.

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THOMAS WALSH, THE IRISH APOSTLE.

WE have seen that when Wesley made his second visit to Ireland, in 1748, he had with him in addition to Meriton, one of his regular helpers, a young lay preacher by the name of Robert Swindells. The latter remained for some time in Ireland, faithful, efficient, and devoted to his work. He preached in all sorts of places and to all sorts of audiences.

In 1749 Swindells went to Limerick, and preached there daily upon the parade-ground. On one occasion there stood listening to him a pale-faced, sad-looking young man who seemed to be drinking in deeply every word that the preacher uttered. This young man was named Thomas Walsh. He had been reared a strict Roman Catholic, but, disgusted with many of the doctrines and practices of popery, had at last openly revolted—not against religion itself, however, but against the form of it as he had

seen it practiced in this Church. Previous to this time he had been in a terrible state. "The arrows of the Almighty," he says, "stuck fast in me, and my very bones trembled because of my sins." He longed for religious comfort, for knowledge, for a faith that would hold his soul secure above all alarms. Nowhere within the teachings of this Church had he been able to find such comfort, such faith. Nor could her priests help him; they seemed as much in the dark concerning his state as he was himself. He confessed to them; he poured out before them the whole burden of his soul. The only consolation they could give was the recommendation of many prayers and of rigorous penances. He tried them. He fasted; he prayed incessantly; he called upon God, the saints, the angels, the Holy Virgin to hear him; he lay upon the ground, throwing himself from side to side and tearing his hair in his agony. Finding no relief, he grew reckless and tried to seek forgetfulness in various amusements. His torture only increased. "A hell," he says, "opened in my heart." He came back to his old fastings, prayers, and penances. He made an austere record of his failings and his sins. St. Augustine himself could scarcely have equaled him in his startling candor and rigid flaying of self. Yet he says he was still as one "that beateth the air." And why? Because he had so far had no Bible to shed light upon the way—no honest, fearless minister of God to set his feet in the right path. But at length, when eighteen years of age, one of the precious books came into his hands, and for the first

time a ray of the true light fell upon his way. He renounced the Catholic faith and attached himself to that of the Established Church. But still he was not satisfied. No comfort, no assured hope had as yet come. "There was no rest in my bones," he says, "by reason of my sins."

It was in something of this state of mind that, attracted by the novelty of the scene, he had joined the crowd that pressed up around Swindells on the parade-ground. He fastened his eyes with eager scrutiny upon the preacher's pale and earnest face, hoping, longing to hear him say something that would bring some light and hope and gladness out of the sore tumult within. The words were spoken, almost from the beginning, for Swindells's text was: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

It is not our purpose to follow Walsh through all the fierce conflict born of this first real awakening to consciousness of his condition. Like a shaft winged by the Almighty hand the truth had buried itself at last within his heart, "not his guilt only, but the all-sufficiency of Christ." It was not merely a repentance of sin that was necessary to salvation, but a full and free acceptance of Christ. How had he missed it all along, and it so simple? A little later, at a Methodist meeting in New Market, the glorious and unmistakable transformation of the new birth came. It was a conversion in full keeping with his ardent Irish temperament. "I was divinely assured," he says, "that God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all

my sins; the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. I broke out into tears of joy and love."

From that time forth his life, in the language of Robert Southey, was such as "might indeed almost convince a Catholic that saints are to be found in other communions as well as the Church of Rome." He became one of the most zealous and devoted of the lay ministry in Ireland, and no man of those heroic times bore the brunt of the battle more gloriously than he, nor were there any readier "to suffer or die for Christ's sake."

Entering the ministry with awe and reverence for the holiness of the calling, his constant prayer was, "Lord Jesus, be thou my sun and star." He walked thirty miles to keep his first appointment, which was in a barn, and was greeted by an audience which treated him to the incongruous mixture of "contradictions, mockery, and tears." He stood his ground faithfully, and preached with such power and pathos that the contradictions and mockery were soon all swallowed up by the tears. He returned to Limerick, and preached there for some weeks with such force and fervor that those awakened through his words could not be induced to leave the spot until they had found peace for their tortured souls. He passed "as a flame of fire" through Leinster and Connaught, preaching twice and sometimes thrice a day, generally in the open air, for soon no house could hold his congregations.

His knowledge of the Irish language and the readi-

ness with which the words came to him gave him an almost extraordinary advantage, for "it is an old maxim in Ireland," says Southey, "'When you plead for your life, plead in Irish.'" But as musical and pathetic as is the language when thus applied, it has a still more "peculiarly affecting expressiveness" when used in reference to God and sacred things. And Thomas Walsh knew how to take advantage of this expressiveness to its fullest extent. Especially astonishing was his work among the Papists. They came in wonder-struck crowds to hear this amazing story of a loving and forgiving Saviour told in their own deep-reaching and musical language. As it was revealed to them word by word, they would smite their breasts, while floods of tears rolled down their cheeks. Again, the old habits and instincts strong within them, they would invoke the Virgin Mary, and in voices shaken with sobs declare that they would follow him as a saint all over the world. Even the miserable beggars in the streets, under the overwhelming sweetness and pathos of his words, would clasp their hands imploringly together, and kneeling before him pray and weep. Never had there been such scenes in Ireland, not even under the preaching of Whitefield or the Wesleys.

A Romanist, who had for years been laying aside his earnings so that he might pay them over to the priest on his death-bed, and thus have his soul prayed out of purgatory, came to Walsh and besought him to take the money and make the prayers he had intended the priests to make for his soul's safe passage

into paradise. "No man can forgive your sins," said the faithful Walsh; "the gift of God cannot be purchased with money; only the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin." Greatly astonished by what he heard, the poor Romanist fell upon his knees and besought Walsh to show him how he was to obtain this precious cleansing. Kneeling at his side, Walsh prayed for him with all the deep ardor of his Irish nature. He was most soundly converted.

At another time a native, with whom he remonstrated in English for some unbecoming deed, at the same time warning him of the wrath to come, swore to kill him. Thereupon Walsh began earnestly and feelingly to reprove him in Irish. "Why didst thou not speak so to me at the beginning?" cried the excited man. In a little while "the lion had become a lamb," as the wonderful preacher "let him know in Irish what Christ had done for sinners." He soon departed with "a broken heart."

Alarmed at the great success of Walsh, the Romish priests incited mobs against him. He had many and thrilling escapes. Once on his way to Rosscrea he was attacked by a party of seventy-eight men, all armed with clubs. They, however, proposed that if he would allow them to bring a clergyman of the Established Church and a priest of Rome to convert him to either faith he might choose after hearing the arguments on each side, they would let him go; but if he did not they would kill him on the spot. He refused, whereupon they still hesitated, and proposed that if he would swear never to come to Rosscrea

again to preach they would turn him loose. He fearlessly replied that he would far rather suffer martyrdom than give such a pledge. They now hurried him away, "raging like wild beasts," with the determination of drowning him in a well near by. But his calm, intrepid bearing so won upon the admiration of a few of the better disposed of them that by the time the well was reached the sentiment of the party was about equally divided between throwing him into the well and allowing him to escape. While they wrangled and argued, the parish minister interfered and bore him away to the inn.

He had no sooner reached the inn than the crowd collected again, and seizing him carried him into the streets. It being market-day, he boldly took his stand at a corner of the square and began to preach. But the mob laid violent hands upon him once more, vowing to put him out of the way if he did not desist. They hastened with him away from the town. Finally, through the kindly offices of a friend who followed him, he managed to get upon his horse. Taking off his hat, he prayed for them with such pathos and fervor, and at its conclusion exhorted them with such persuasion and feeling, as to melt many to tears. He was then allowed to make his way out undisturbed. They often tried to conquer him in similar ways, but he came off victor as on this first occasion, "in peace of conscience and serenity of mind." Through his efforts Methodism was at last firmly established at Rosscreea.

At Cork the magistrate had him arrested and

thrown into prison for preaching. The whole town seemed "moved in his behalf," for his name had become a household word throughout Ireland. Many persons followed him to the prison and stood without, singing hymns, while in the interval he exhorted them. Bedding and provisions were sent to him, and crowds daily gathered about his prison window in defiance of the magistrates. He preached to them continually, though often the multitude was so great that his voice could not reach to the center of them.

But the Papists were not his only persecutors; from communicants of the other churches he met with many indignities, often with violence. In the north of Ireland he was once so severely handled by Protestants that for several weeks he lay at death's door with a fever that he had contracted through exposures to which his Christian (?) tormentors had subjected him. Many unkind stories were told regarding him; scandal of every sort was freely circulated. At Clonmel the priest told his congregation from the pulpit that Walsh had been a servant-boy to a certain priest; that he had stolen his master's books, and thus learned to preach. Another declared that the real Walsh was dead, and that this man was the devil in his shape. Not heeding these falsehoods and slanders, he kept bravely and faithfully on his way, giving to the Master and his cause "the fullness and the energy of a glowing soul." "Never," declared Wesley, "have I known a preacher who, in so few years as he remained upon earth, was an instrument for converting so many sinners."

He literally wore himself out. For nine years, under such mental and physical suffering as would have completely broken down a less resolute and devoted man, he kept up his wonderful work. In 1758 he was "just alive," yet he continued to preach twice and often thrice a day, besides constantly visiting the poor, the sick, and the dying. Truly, if ever a saint in earthly form was allowed to take up its dwelling-place among men, that saint was Thomas Walsh. Wesley himself, earnest, devoted, his heart aglow with the purest fires of Christian consecration, yet looked upon Walsh with "wonder and reverence." He appeared to be always in prayer or in solemn communion with God. "In sleep itself," says Wesley, "to my certain knowledge his soul went out in groans and sighs and tears to God. His heart, having attained such a tendency to its Lord, could only give over when it ceased to beat." He seemed constantly "absorbed in God," and often his transfigured face gave eloquent expression to what was passing within. His last words were: "He is come! He is come! My beloved is mine, and I am his forever!" He died at the age of twenty-eight, after having been eight years in the Methodist ministry.

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METHODISM'S FIRST MARTYR IN IRELAND.

AMONG the leading Methodist preachers in Ireland was John McBurney. He was faithful, courageous, and untiring. No mob, however violent, could frighten him from his duty. Even blows and the fiercest

of persecutions did not turn him from his course. He had a regular circuit, but often deviated from it to preach at other places.

Once he went to Clones, and gathering a crowd about him in the market-place, he began earnestly to exhort them. The crowd continued to increase. Soon it had assumed such proportions that the Papists, greatly alarmed, went away and gathered a rabble. Returning, they so persecuted the assembly that for a time it seemed that McBurney's hearers would be obliged to give way and either take to flight or stand and battle for their lives. Some went for a magistrate, hoping to get him to interfere; but being a weak, cowardly man, he dared not.

Just at the moment when a crisis seemed imminent a singular incident took place. Looking on with much interest at the worshipers, and paying close attention to the preacher, was an old, gray-haired soldier with a tall, erect figure and a very determined air. Seeing the state of affairs, he went away, procured a musket, and returning placed himself beside a tree on the outskirts of the crowd that stood listening to McBurney. Here, with his gun threateningly raised, he declared with an oath that he would instantly shoot down the first man who attempted to pass for the purpose of interfering with the meeting. He was a Scotchman—a man really wicked in his own habits, but with very high notions of the respect due religious worship, and with the courage to uphold his convictions even in the face of such a mob as this. This bold action had the desired effect upon

the cowardly rabble, for, after the old soldier had taken his stand by the tree, not one attempted to reach the proscribed ground beyond. Nor was this the last time that he defended McBurney and his congregation from their craven assaulters. At every visit of the preacher for weeks thereafter he mounted guard over the assembly, standing by the tree, gun in hand, and with his eagle eye fixed warningly upon the cowed rabble.

But alas! McBurney could not be so bravely protected everywhere he preached, and the beaten and angered mob, thwarted in their designs upon him here, determined to seek their revenge elsewhere. Accordingly, on one of his itinerant journeys they followed him to the neighboring village of Ennis-killen. The Methodists had a chapel there, and while they were assembled within, listening to the words of the preacher, the mob, armed with stones and clubs, made an assault upon the place. Breaking off the doors and windows they rushed in, and, violently dragging out the men, women, and children, set upon the defenseless preacher. He was knocked down, beaten, and pulled about until he was supposed to be dead. But he was not dead; and on regaining consciousness and attempting to rise, he was again knocked down, while one ruffianly fellow put his foot upon his face, declaring with horrible blasphemy that he would "tread the Holy Ghost out of him before he stopped." "May God forgive you," said the poor sufferer as soon as he could speak; "I do, as God knows." What man but a Christian could

have made such a reply as this under the circumstances?

After this ferocious beating, his poor bruised and broken body was placed upon a horse, while one of the ruffians got up behind and began to belabor the horse unmercifully, starting him upon a wild gallop down the mountain, and managing to drop off just as the horse bounded forth with the maimed and half-dead preacher fastened to his back. At the base of the mountain the animal was stopped by some travelers and the preacher rescued.

Unmindful of the serious injuries he had received, McBurney continued preaching as long as he could drag himself to his appointments. He looked upon it as matter for the greatest rejoicing that he, a lowly servant of the great Master, had been accounted worthy to suffer for his sake. Not long after this brutal treatment at Enniskillen, he died from the effect of his hurts—the first martyr of Methodism in Ireland, as Thomas Beard had been in England.



WHITEFIELD AT OXMANTOWN GREEN.

It was during Whitefield's second visit to Ireland, in the summer of 1751, that he determined to preach at Oxmantown Green, then a large open ground near the royal barracks at Dublin. This green was the regular Sunday resort of two factions of the lowest class of the people—one known as "The Ormond Boys" and the other as "The Liberty Boys." Here they met for the purpose of fighting with each other

and to engage in various rough contests, such as leaping, boxing, tumbling, and the like. Many of the scenes enacted on such occasions would have put to the blush even some of those at Moorfields.

When Whitefield made known his intention to preach at this spot his friends endeavored to dissuade him, feeling assured that he would either be killed or seriously injured. But he was resolute. Greatly to the surprise of all, his first sermon at Oxmantown passed off without disturbance of any kind. The preaching seemed to make a deep impression, many in the audience giving signs of sincere conviction. A far different scene awaited him, however, on the occasion of his second sermon.

After giving due notice of his intention to preach there again on the following Sunday, Whitefield at the hour appointed took his way through the door of the barracks, which stood wide open, and thence on to the green. Taking his stand near the barracks wall, he began to preach. He felt much security in the presence of the soldiers, not doubting that should he be assaulted in any way they would give him their protection. During the singing, the prayer, and the sermon that followed, Whitefield was unmolested save for a few stones and clods of dirt with which he was every now and then pelted. Such a course of action was quite unusual on the part of so large a multitude, and considering its disorderly behavior in other respects. But the mob itself had no spite against the preacher, nor any desire to do him real hurt. There were others at hand, however, with no such good-

natured feelings. In truth, a danger threatened—a danger far more menacing than any which the bold preacher, with all his thrilling experiences, had yet been called upon to face. But, in utter ignorance of it, he kept on with his discourse.

As the country was then at war, and soldiers were constantly marching away or coming in, Whitefield took occasion not only to exhort his hearers to fear God and seek a new life, so as to be prepared to meet death calmly at any moment, but he also exhorted them to be loyal to the king, ending the services by praying fervently for the monarch. When he had concluded he tried to make his way out through the door by which he had entered, but greatly to his surprise the passage was denied him. He found that he would have to pass from one end of the green to the other before he could get outside the walls. On turning, with that purpose, he was considerably startled to see drawn up in solid ranks before him thousands of Roman Catholics. He now understood what the arrangement between them and the soldiers had been. They partly opened, as if to allow him to pass. With a prayer to God for succor, he threw himself boldly into their midst. They closed in about him. They threw volleys of stones; they clutched at his clothing; they spat upon him; they cursed him with the most dreadful oaths. Backward and forward he reeled, panting for breath and covered with blood. How he ever came forth from that fiendish rabble without mortal hurt only his watchful Master knew. But he did get through at last, and

staggering to the door of a minister's house, which stood near the green, he had just strength enough left to pull the knocker when he fell exhausted upon the steps. After he was taken in he continued many minutes speechless and panting for breath. He was soon surrounded by weeping friends, who fully believed they had come to look their last upon him. But after they had given him a cordial and washed his wounds, they found that with the exception of one large gash near his temple, the injuries were not so serious as they appeared to be. A coach was procured and he was carried home. The Catholics had not yet dispersed. When they found out who was in the coach they followed it for some distance with fierce oaths and maledictions. But the presence of Whitefield's friends—some of them among the most influential citizens of Dublin—saved him from further violence. Reaching his lodging in safety, he joined with his friends in a hymn of thanksgiving for his deliverance.

In writing of this fearful experience to a friend, Whitefield said: "I received many blows and wounds; one was particularly large, and near the temple. I thought of Stephen, and was in hopes like him to go off in this bloody triumph to the immediate presence of my Master." Whitefield often used to push back his wig to show this wound to the little children whom he coaxed to his knee with the promise to tell them of that memorable Sunday at Oxmantown Green. To one little girl in Virginia, who never forgot it to the day of her death, he said: "Come here,

my little girl, and put your finger in that gash where the brickbat hit me. That is the scar I bear for my Master."

* * *

DUNCAN WRIGHT AND THE CONDEMNED YOUTH.

AMONG the soldiers in Ireland, Methodism had no braver representative than Duncan Wright, a Scotchman. Since childhood he had shown a "bookish inclination," often reading and weeping until his head ached—wishing and longing to be a Christian, but "not knowing how." At eighteen he enlisted in the army, with the hope of seeing some of the world and thus "easing his heart." The next year he was in camp at Cashel, in Ireland, and seemingly altogether taken up with the bustling life of a soldier. But do what he would he could not escape his religious convictions. One day a Methodist corporal preached to the troops. Wright's soul was stirred. At Limerick the Methodist soldiers "disturbed his conscience." He at last attended the Methodist society in that place. He was so deeply impressed that he sought in private the conversation and guidance of its members. At last, on "a wakeful, weeping night," the Lord brought him "in an instant out of darkness into his marvelous light."

With his conversion came the conviction that he ought to preach to his comrades. But for two years he resisted the impression, though the Voice left not his heart day nor night. At length a tragic event showed him plainly that he ought no longer to resist his duty.

Desertions had of late become so frequent in the army that the Government, in order to frighten future offenders, determined to shoot a deserter in every city in Ireland. Among the condemned was a youth, just twenty years of age, in Duncan's own regiment. Forgetting his timidity for a time, and not caring that the guards surrounded the condemned, the earnest young Scotchman hastened to speak words of encouragement and consolation. He found the luckless youth "weeping as if his heart would break," and intently reading, "The Whole Duty of Man"—like a drowning man, in his extremity catching desperately at a straw. Making a brave effort, Wright spoke a few words of Christian cheer, and despite the gaping mouths of the guards besought him to look alone for help to Christ Jesus, the pitiful and loving, the Saviour of *all*. Wright visited him again in the evening, and though there were many soldiers looking on, as at the other meeting, still the young exhorter bravely entreated him to accept this Saviour while there was yet time, closing with a fervent prayer in his behalf. The poor young man at last saw himself an undone sinner, only to be saved through the precious blood of Him who had been slain. During the four days previous to his execution Wright visited him twice and sometimes thrice a day, exhorting and praying. The youth was most happily converted, and expressed no further fear of death. Those who saw him go to his execution were struck with the "serene joy" that sat upon his countenance. He said but little, only ask-

ing for ten minutes in which to pray. The soldiers detailed to fire the fatal shots could not help but remark upon his calm and fearless bearing, in so great a contrast to that of one they had seen die shortly before at Dublin under similar circumstances. The latter had shown the most craven fear, pitifully protesting that he could not die, the officer of the day being obliged to ride up to him several times and tell him he *must* die. But this intrepid youth was not upon his knees more than five or six minutes, when he arose, calmly faced his executioners, and, "dropping the signal, went to paradise."

Duncan Wright could no longer hesitate as to his duty. The death of this young man had forcibly shown him the influence he might have among his comrades. Every night after roll-call he held a meeting at his quarters. He never lacked for a large and attentive audience. A Methodist class was soon formed. At first he only sung and prayed with them, but their need growing greater, he was finally obliged to lay aside his hymn-book and exhort them. He thus became known as "The Camp Preacher."

Moving on with his regiment, he was the first preacher in Galway, where he firmly planted Methodism. The same results followed him at Dublin, "many seals to his ministry" being given him in that city. His colonel tried to stop his preaching but could not, and was at last glad to get him out of the army. "Thus it was," says Wright, "that the Lord thrust me into the harvest." At Waterford,

where a great revival took place not long afterward, he was one of the most zealous and successful of the ministers. Wesley at last sent him out as a regular traveling preacher. He gave thirty active, tireless years to the ministry, and died in triumph at his post.

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